

# The China Dog in OZ

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Founded on and Continuing  
the Stories by March Laumer

1990

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"Gosh," said Toby, the life-sized pug, "do you mean to say there's a whole country full of china animals in Oz?"

"Natch," said the Pink Kitten. "You imagine it, we've got it. That's the rule in this country."

"Well, I've often imagined it—in my wildest dreams," confessed the dog, "but I never imagined—!" Words failed him!

"What brought that up anyway?" said Eureka, getting up and stretching. "Oh, a book." Her interest quotient plummeted. The kitten, though very intelligent, had never learned to read. Toby, on the other hand t now that he was magically mobile had spent the last year, what time he and his cat friend weren't wasting in idle gamboling, diligently acquiring literacy. You never knew when it might come in handy to be able to read, and even if it didn't, it would be fun. Toby, intelligent in his own right, had noticed that individuals intent upon reading nearly always looked to be at ease and contented, and sometimes they laughed out loud. Ergo, reading was probably a fun thing to do.

Right now he was working his way through the series of histories of the land of Oz and he had got as far as *The Wonderful Wizard*. "It says here that Miss Gale and a lot of the people we know visited a 'dainty china country' pretty soon after she first arrived here. Isn't that fascinating?"

"Only if one's fascination threshold is very low," said the cat nonchalantly. "Dorothy told me all about it. She's always been very fond of china knickknacks. At the time I was excited to hear how her trip to witch Glinda to get help was going to end so it seemed to me that china country just got in the way."

"Oh, well, don't tell me how it turns out!" warned the (also) china dog. "I want to be surprised."

That seemed fair enough and the pink kitten left him to get on with it. That's how Toby, through devotion to *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, almost missed out on *The Patchwork Girl of Oz*, which was taking place when Eureka got downstairs. She strolled into a linen closet next door but one to Princess Dorothy's suite.

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(The *next* room was occupied by Dorothy's ceramics collection, cabinets upon cabinets of it.) Among the bedding and nappery the kitten discovered a glass cat.

"Good heavens, a glass cat," she said. "Where did you come from?"

"The home of Dr. Pipt."

"Who's that?"

"A powerful crooked magician in the land of the Munchkins. He made me."

"Out of glass?"

"Completely. I have pink brains. You can see 'em roll around when I think.

"That's nothing. I'm pink all over."

"So I noticed."

"But what are you doing in the linen cupboard?"

"Search me. It was that girl Dorothy's idea. She wanted to go eat her dinner so she stuck me in here. I didn't get the connection."

"Maybe she thought you'd get glass fibres on her bedspread if you lay on that."

"Mmm. What about you?"

"My name's Eureka. I'm Dorothy's pet." In the interests of frankness she added, "One of them that is. She's also got an awful black dog."

"I met it," related the glass cat. "At first I didn't know what it was. There aren't any dogs in Oz, you know."

"Well, actually there are," corrected Eureka. "Dorothy saw one in the dainty china country. She told me about it. It was little and purple."

"'Dainty China Country.' That's a new one on me," said the glass cat. "China's not as fine as glass, of course, but it might be kind of interesting to see."

But flesh animals were of more interest to the kitten and she reverted. "Did that black dog go for you?" she asked, "you being a cat and all."

"Why, no, it didn't. It seemed remarkably mild. I thought it

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was probably under sedation. It sniffed of the patchwork quilt girl we had along with us but didn't do anything. Oh, it went up once and rubbed its head against the Dorothy girl's hand where she was standing by the mantelshelf fiddling with some figurines. But it never said anything."

"It: I like that," said Eureka. "No; it never speaks, just yaps fit to wake the dead—but not even that consistently. Quite odd. I understand it's been that way ever since it temporarily turned into a bull terrier. Mostly it's a cairn. Bit manic, I think. Never mind. You staying here long?"

"Search me. Nobody's said. We've been on kind of a quest but one of our members got tossed in jail and I think that's rather thrown a monkey wrench in the works... Say, have you ever seen a woozy?"

"A woozy? Why, no, I don't think I have. What are they for?"

"Lighting fires mostly. Their eyes shoot sparks when they get annoyed. They're kinda neat. You want to see one?"

"I don't mind if I do," said Eureka. "Have you got one?"

"There's one around somewhere. We found it on the way. It also got sent away when Dorothy went to put on the feed bag. She gave word for it to be fed. I think she kinda liked it. I saw her patting him. She did me too—but then she quit. I don't think I'm going to be any pet of hers."

"Oh, well, good. Then we needn't be rivals," said the pink kitten. "I'm her pet."

"You're welcome to the job," dismissed Bungle as she led the way she thought the Woozy might have gone. Soon they came upon him, in a box room.

The pink kitten was suitably impressed by the blue Woozy. Secretly it occurred to her that they made quite a color-complementary couple. She observed his squareness (which gave way in places to rectangularity) from every angle and made appropriately commendatory remarks. "I hope that honeycomb's to your taste," she said. "I know the bees that made it."

The newcomers to the palace were not slow to take advantage of the insider's knowledge possessed by their new kitten

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acquaintance. Eureka knew all about everything concerning “her” palace and was glad to play cicerone. She showed the cat and woozy the orangery, Dorothy’s pottery room, the Hall of the Magic Picture, and presently brought them to the reading room on the third floor.

Toby had just closed the big green volume after reading the famous sentence, “I’m so glad to be at home again!” and felt most edified. He turned to see whom his friend the kitten had brought in.

Well, everybody liked everybody. Toby and the Woozy were each glad to meet another male. Eureka was proud to show off her canine friend. The glass cat was astonished—and frankly admiring—at seeing someone almost (well, certainly not *quite!*) as unusual as herself and openly admitted that if china had not the clarity of glass it was more colorful. The Woozy had to smile and said, “Bungle has pink brains, our new friend has a pink neck bow, and Eureka is pink all over. I’d better get myself something pink to wear if we’re going to be a bunch.”

In fact the creatures’ encounter was all so goody-goo that it might have become cloying if the glass cat had not said to Toby, “You’ve got a chipped toe, I see.”

“Yes,” admitted the dog ruefully. “A little girl did that. She never meant to, of course, and she was so sorry afterwards.”

“Beware of little girls,” said Bungle sententiously and the others thought she might be getting her own back after the disdain shown her by Princess Dorothy. “What are you going to do about it?” she went on.

“Do?” said Toby. “Why, I don’t know. I didn’t think there was anything one could do about it. The chip was lost long ago—even if there had been any glue strong enough...” He trailed off.

“Hmf,” sniffed the cat. “That hardly seems good enough. I myself haven’t a scratch or a crack on me. I’ve been careful, but if I had got any I wouldn’t have been content to let it rest at that.”

Now the pink kitten had always regretted that her friend had a sore toe. On the other hand, it was the wave of tenderness

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that swept over her when she first observed the wound<sup>§</sup> that had started her liking the china pug who ended up being her closest (let's face it: *only*) friend among animals in Oz. She still cherished the chippedness of the toe and wasn't sure that she at all cared to have it mended. And yet she couldn't say she wanted Toby to go around with a limp the rest of his life.

"Does it hurt?" said the Woozy.

"I don't think it does. I'm not quite sure what 'hurt' means. But it's awkward for trying to chase a ball or anything."

"I think we ought to get it seen to," said the glass cat, who was a perfectionist and didn't like to see any work of art, even—or especially—domestic, at all defaced.

"How to go about it?" they all wondered. Then Toby had an idea.

"I'll bet they'd know what to do in the dainty china country," he said. "It says in the book they're always falling over and breaking themselves. Unless they are just going eventually to turn into a pile of chips and shards they must know how to repair themselves."

"They might, at that," said Bungle. "Maybe we should go and see."

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§ See *The Careless Kangaroo of Oz*. Editor's note.

A little ladybug zoomed into a garden on a breeze that deposited her on a Snow Queen hibiscus bush. She posed like a jewel against the snowy-white edge surrounding an apple-green serrated leaf.

As she caught her breath she looked around to see what sort of world she had landed in this time.

Recently there had been precious few friends to talk to in the scraggly unkempt excuse for a garden that fate seemed to think she should adorn. Oh, yes, there had been plenty of aphids to satisfy her appetite and keep her looking plump and shiny, and to bring out the brilliant orange color of her wings. But congenial friends? Not a one. The garden had been dry, unfertilized, neglected, and forgotten by its absentee owners for many months past. Not a single butterfly or moth to exchange the latest gossip with, or even a dragonfly from whom to learn what was new in far-away places.

But this place with lush greenery all around seemed to her like heaven as she settled in to stay forever, if allowed. What interesting little parties one could plan: set a tea table with a delicate cloth of cobwebs spread over a rose petal; serve dew-drops with bits of mint leaf and nectar from nearby myrtle blossoms. Hummingbirds and butterflies could no doubt be counted on to stop by and rest for a few moments in their daily search for food amid the delights of the garden.

Lurabelle Ladybug lost no time in preparing just such a tempting tea table so as to be ready—in case. Then she squatted down and waited and as she did so the Rev. Foldinglegs I. Mantis happened to stroll by. He stopped.

“Good afternoon,” said Lurabelle. “Won’t you sit down and visit for a few minutes?”

“Thank you,” said the Rev. Mr. Mantis. “I believe I would enjoy the company of so charming a hostess as you appear to be. If we may first say just a few words of prayer in thanks for this beautiful day, I will be happy to tell you something of our





garden.”

As Lurabelle filled the tiny cups with her mint tea Mr. Foldinglegs arranged his long thin limbs under the petal table in such a way that they were virtually unnoticeable.

“We in this garden,” he then said, “are such a congenial bunch! We rarely have any arguments or fussing. I’m sure you will enjoy living here, should you decide to settle permanently. You seem the sort of insect to fit into our group nicely.”

“Thank you,” said Lurabelle. “Please have more of the aphid patties,” she went on, passing the little plate. “As a matter of fact I abhor fumers and fussers. They waste so much time.”

“We do have one character here that no one really likes,” said the reverend gentleinsect. “It’s a big fat green thing that lives in the poinsettia bush. She eats continuously, ruins the leaves, and is, besides, frightening to look at. You will do well to keep your distance from her.”

“Oh, I will,” said Miss Ladybug. “Thank you so much for warning me.”

“And now I shall be on my way,” said the Rev. Mr. Mantis, unwrapping his legs from the hibiscus stem. Lurabelle had given up the idea of moving on to a rose-bush, realizing how awkward it would be for guests to have to keep thinking of avoiding the thorns.

With a tip of his hat the divine was off down the path to attend to his various duties in the garden parish.

Climbing a bit higher in the bush Lurabelle looked across the garden—past daisies and poppies, to what she had noticed on first flying in: a small lake. ‘How delightful,’ she thought. ‘If it is no farther away than it looks I might take a little while to explore its beauty. It would be good exercise after the meal.’ Lurabelle had been a bit greedy and eaten up all the leftovers after the minister had departed.

At that moment Timothy Inchworm appeared far down below under the spreading hibiscus. The ladybug watched as he slowly made his way up through the branches and then rested his chin on the tea table two twig-levels down. “Good afternoon,

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Miss Ladybug. Pardon me but I read your thoughts about going to the lake. I'm psychic, you see."

"Oh, I didn't know," said Lurabelle, acknowledging his existence. "In fact, I don't know you. I'm new here."

That was the cue for Timothy to introduce himself. He explained a little about his profession. "I measure things. I've measured the distance from here to the lake many times and it almost always comes out the same. You're right: the lake is no farther away than it looks."

"How could the distance be 'almost' the same each time?" enquired Miss L., intrigued. "The lake doesn't move, does it?"

"Only up and down—sometimes, in a wind. Not sideways," admitted the inchworm. "Not so far. But you see, sometimes someone gets in my way and then I lose count. For instance, that silly kitten Eureka almost stepped on me once. Not content with that she went on to pretend that I was an undersized mouse. She kept on pushing and tossing me around 'til I quite lost count. For a while I could hardly measure even half an inch. I had to rest afterwards and meditate for such a long time that people began to say I counted for nothing.

"Anyway, for your enlightenment, the distance from here to the lake is six hundred times my length, which works out at about fifty human-feet. Is that going to help you, Miss er...?"

"Lurabelle," supplied his hostess. "Why, yes. You are very kind to offer the information. If the weather is nice I think I will visit the lake tomorrow. In the meantime, let me invite you to tea. I can whip up some more of my mint blend in no time. I seem to remember having heard that mint tea is particularly helpful for psychic beings. I believe it puts them in a very relaxed and receptive mood."

"Thank you, Lurabelle. I may call you 'Lurabelle', may I not?" The lady-beetle simpered. "It is nice to find someone who understands these things. I dare say you know the difference, for instance, between thinking and meditating. But some of our garden friends are so difficult to talk to. Take Bettina Butterfly. She hasn't a serious thought in her head. She is a sweet viva-

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cious girl, whom I admire and respect but could never really converse with. And yet, her bright pink wings with pale blue veins attract the attention of all who come near her and her life is a happy carefree adventure, as she goes from flower to flower, drinking their nectar and exchanging secrets with those she meets.”

Thus Lurabelle Ladybug and Timothy Inchworm fled the time. Presently the latter crawled back down tile hibiscus stem to his hone underneath the bush, feeling happy about his new neighbor and content with the world in general.

“Boy, what nerve,” said the Glass Cat. “Did you see the way they grabbed that adventure out from under us?”

“Yes, I noticed,” said the Woozy sadly. He had just been crying at the trial of Ojo the Unlucky<sup>s</sup> and the mood lingered on.

“I’m mad enough to spit tacks,” reported the cat. “I’d like to show those two females a thing or two.”

“Are you referring to Her Gracious Majesty, Ozma, Queen of All Oz, and the American princess, Dorothy Gale?” said the pink kitten.

“Those are the ones!”

The quartet of new friends were back in the china dog’s favorite snuggery, the reading room on the third floor of the Palace of Magic. They were discussing the outcome of the trial by non-jury that had taken place in the throne room of that same Palace that morning.

“What an awful place for a trial anyway,” grumbled Bungle. “That threatening throne in the corner of the hall. I suppose she’s got a throne in every room?” she accused, very unjustly.

“Well, not *every* room,” corrected Eureka, secretly enjoying the glass cat’s animadversions. They made her feel quite warm toward her glass colleague, although admittedly solid glass was something it was a little hard to feel warm about.

“And what a shocking performance: gathering all those hundreds of people to witness the embarrassment of the poor boy. And for what?: picking a miserable blade of grass!”

“Oh, it’s the law of the land,” justified the kitten. “And Ozma is frightfully just—if by ‘just’ you mean enforcing laws however unreasonable right down to the last comma and period.”

“Mmm,” mused the Woozy. “On the way here I heard the Shaggy Man talking about how powerful and just the little queen is.”

“That explains why she holds her trials in the throne room instead of some discreet side chamber,” said Bungle. “I suppose

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§ See *The Patchwork Girl of Oz*. Editor’s note.

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it's the biggest room in the building...?"

"Well, except for the ballroom," admitted the kitten. "But what are you getting at?"

"Just that this Princess Ozma must have to hold non-stop trials over all the cows in Oz, and that would fill up the throne room, if not a football field."

"Cows?" enquired the china pug, while the Woozy reminisced:

"Yes, I almost thought there *was* a haunting fragrance of barnyard in the trial room just now."

"Sure," pursued the glass cat. "Because grazing cows, of which I've noticed plenty, must account for a few million clover plants every day, including—no doubt—some six-leaved ones. And there will be Queen Ozma at her magic picture justly jotting down every little crime. What in the world has she got a stupid rule like that for anyway?"

"Just to keep us on our toes, I guess," posited the pink kitten. "Like big sister watching over us."

"Oh, now be fair," put in the generous Woozy, "Queen Ozma explained that the prohibition was to keep people from practising magic. Six-leaf clovers are a powerful part of certain charms, it seems."

"Just enforcing the anti-sorcery rule isn't enough?" queried Bungle sourly. "In that case, yellow butterflies become potential criminals, flying around with wings that are big medicine in the wrong hands. And what about yourself? If you took a pair of scissors to your tail hairs and then they fell into the possession of an unscrupulous magicworker you'd be the accessory to crime."

"What a hollow mockery," the bigger cat went on. "The injustice of the whole thing—well, it's scarcely a case of 'justice' or not; rather of sheer nonsense. It's shown by the way everybody cheered when the princess forgave Ojo. If he'd actually done anything harmful, it would be ridiculous to forgive him—like sweetly saying 'Oh, that's all right' to somebody who'd just murdered a whole family."

"Temper, temper," cautioned the kitten, secretly hoping her

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now much admired fellow feline would go on all day.

“But what really made me burn,” pursued Bungle right on cue, “was the way that bunch blew up our search party and started arranging everything to suit themselves: one was to go here and another wasn’t to go there. That American girl and the fellow made out of straw inviting themselves in on the quest and then starting to say what was to happen to us! The girl said I was to be turned over to a serving wench! Nuts to that. I don’t belong to that girl—”

“But you said you didn’t want to go along with the rescue party any more,” pointed out the Woozy, continuing to be fair.

“Right. Who wanted to go traveling with that stuck-up girl? who doesn’t like me any better than I do her. And that just *she* is appointed to direct my affairs...!” The cat seethed a bit and then continued. “I loved the way the dear old Patchwork Girl told Ozma where to get off when she started saying what Scraps was to do.” Then, turning to the Woozy, “I just wish you’d stuck up for yourself,” she said, “when she decided to stop you going along with the party.”

“Oh, but she’s a queen and all,” disclaimed the modest Woozy.

“Never mind. I’m glad you’re with us. Now the question is: what do we do to wipe their eyes?”

““Wipe their eyes?”” echoed everybody, shocked.

“Sure, make ‘em feel sorry they’ve been so mean—and not just to us.”

“We might run away,” suggested the pink kitten demurely.

“Oh!”

Everybody considered the proposal. The two law-abiding males thought such a punishment might be too exquisite, whereas the glass cat thought it might not be exquisite enough. “Who would care?” she stated the problem succinctly.

That’s right. Who would? The Woozy and Glass Cat were strangers in the Emerald City, had only been there two days. Nobody would miss them. Besides, animosities had already been aroused. Dorothy Gale had said right out she wasn’t much

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charmed by Bungle, and Ozma had rejected out of hand the Woozy's wish to continue as one of the original rescue party. As for the Pink Kitten, she had spoiled her rep right at the time of her first arrival in Oz<sup>§</sup> and had never seemed to be able to live down the damage caused then. Meanwhile, Toby, the life-sized pug, though everyone liked him, was really only at court as an appendage of Eureka the kitten.

Such thinking was bad for the animals' egos and they all grew quite depressed reflecting how their bid for freedom and justice might not even be noticed.

"I suppose we'd have to ask Ozma's permission?" suggested Toby presently,

"To run away?!" said Bungle with scorn. "If you get permission it's not running away any more."

There was a short pause. "Anyway we'll have to leave a note," said the china dog, who really *was* rather law-abiding by nature and didn't like to show lack of regard.

"Have to'?" scoffed the glass cat. "I'm not leaving any note."

But Toby did. Eureka aided and abetted him to the extent of jumping up on the library table and pushing off onto the floor a piece of paper and a pencil for him to write on and with.

"Called away," he wrote. Then they pinned the note to the carpet. After the others had gone out the china dog sneaked back and added: "Maybe we can help."

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§ See *Dorothy and the Wizard in Oz*. Editor's note.



Before them was a great stretch of country having a floor as smooth and shining and white as the bottom of a big platter. Scattered around were many houses made entirely of china and painted in the brightest colors. These houses were quite small, the biggest of them reaching only as high as Dorothy's waist. There were also pretty little barns, with china fences around them; and many cows and sheep and horses and pigs and chickens, all made of china, were standing about in groups.

But the strangest of all were the people who lived in this queer country. There were milk-maids and shepherdesses, with bright-colored bodices and golden spots all over their gowns; and princesses with most gorgeous frocks of silver and gold and purple; and shepherds dressed in knee-breeches with pink and yellow and blue stripes down them, and golden buckles on their shoes; and princes with jewelled crowns upon their heads, wearing ermine robes and satin doublets; and funny clowns in ruffled gowns, with round red spots upon their cheeks and tall, pointed caps. And, strangest of all, these people were all made of china, even to their clothes, and were so small that the tallest of them was no higher than Dorothy's knee.

No one did so much as look at the travellers at first, except one little purple china dog with an extra-large head, which came to the wall and barked at them in a tiny voice, afterward running away again.

"How shall we get down?" asked Dorothy.

They found the ladder so heavy they could not pull it up, so the Scarecrow fell off the wall and the others jumped down upon him so that the hard floor would not hurt their feet. Of course they took pains not to light on his head and get the pins in their feet. When all were safely down they picked up the Scarecrow, whose body was quite flattened out, and patted his straw into shape again.

"We must cross this strange place in order to get to the other side," said Dorothy; "for it would be unwise for us to go any

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other way except due South."

They began walking through the country of the china people, and the first thing they came to was a china milk-maid milking a china cow. As they drew near the cow suddenly gave a kick and kicked over the stool, the pail, and even the milk-maid herself, they all falling on the china ground with a great clatter.

Dorothy was shocked to see that the cow had broken her leg short off, and that the pail was lying in several small pieces, while the poor milk-maid had a nick in her left elbow.

"There!" cried the milk-maid angrily; "see what you have done! My cow has broken her leg, and I must take her to the mender's shop and have it glued on again. What do you mean by coming here and frightening my cow?"

"I'm very sorry," returned Dorothy; "please forgive us."

But the pretty milk-maid was much too vexed to make any answer. She picked up the leg sulkily and led her cow away, the poor animal limping on three legs. As she left them the milk-maid cast many reproachful glances over her shoulder at the clumsy strangers, holding her nicked elbow close to her side.

Dorothy was quite grieved at this mishap.

"We must be very careful here," said the kindhearted Woodman, "or we may hurt these pretty little people so they will never get over it."

A little farther on Dorothy met a most beautifully dressed young princess, who stopped short as she saw the strangers and started to run away.

Dorothy wanted to see more of the Princess, so she ran after her; but the china girl cried out, "Don't chase me! Don't chase me!"

She had such a frightened little voice that Dorothy stopped and said, "Why not?"

"Because," answered the princess, also stopping, a safe distance away, "if I run I may fall down and break myself."

"But could you not be mended?" asked the girl.

"Oh, yes; but one is never so pretty after being mended, you know," replied the Princess.

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"I suppose not," said Dorothy.

"Now there is Mr. Joker, one of our clowns," continued the china lady, "who is always trying to stand upon his head. He has broken himself so often that he is mended in a hundred places, and doesn't look at all pretty. Here he comes now, so you can see for yourself."

Indeed, a jolly little clown now came walking toward them, and Dorothy could see that in spite of his pretty clothes of red and yellow and green he was completely covered with cracks, running every which way and showing plainly that he had been mended in many places.

The Clown put his hands in his pockets, and after puffing out his cheeks and nodding his head at them saucily he said,

"My lady fair,  
Why do you stare  
At poor old Mr. Joker?  
You're quite as stiff  
And prim as if  
You'd eaten up a poker!"

"Be quiet, sir!" said the Princess; "can't you see these are strangers, and should be treated with respect?"

"Well, that's respect, I expect," declared the Clown, and immediately stood upon his head.

"Don't mind Mr. Joker," said the Princess to Dorothy; "he is considerably cracked in his head, and that makes him foolish."

"Oh, I don't mind him a bit," said Dorothy. "But you are so beautiful," she continued, "that I am sure I could love you dearly. Won't you let me carry you back to Kansas, and stand you on Aunt Em's mantel-shelf? I could carry you in my basket."

"That would make me very unhappy," answered the china Princess. "You see, here in our country we live contentedly, and can talk and move around as we please. But whenever any of us are taken away our joints at once stiffen, and we can only stand straight and look pretty. Of course that is all that is expected of us when we are on mantel-shelves and cabinets and drawing-room tables, but our lives are much pleasanter here in our own

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country.”

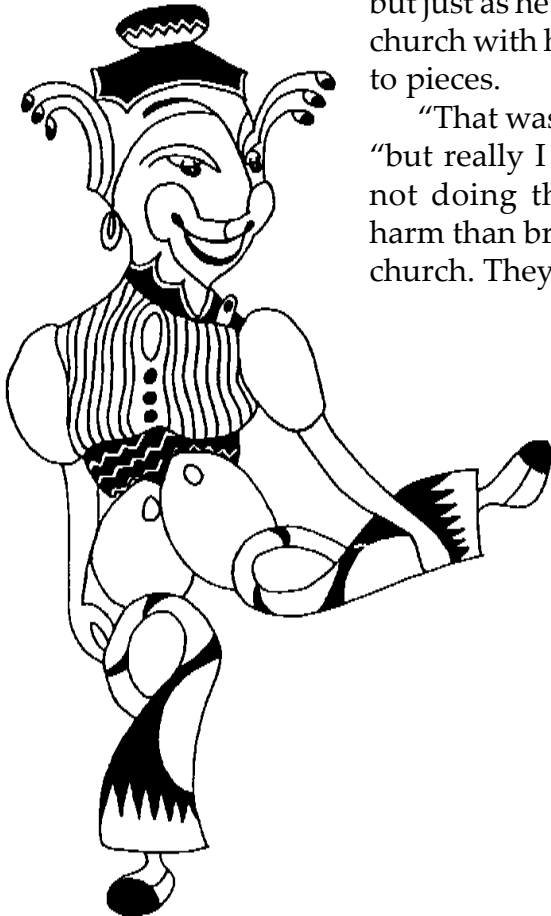
“I would not make you unhappy for all the world!” exclaimed Dorothy; “so I’ll just say good-bye.”

“Good-bye,” replied the princess.

They walked carefully through the china country. The little animals and all the people scampered out of their way, fearing the strangers would break them, and after an hour or so the travellers reached the other side of the country and came to another china wall.

It was not so high as the first, however, and by standing upon the Lion’s back they all managed to scramble to the top. Then the Lion gathered his legs under him and jumped on the wall; but just as he jumped he upset a china church with his tail and smashed it all to pieces.

“That was too bad,” said Dorothy, “but really I think we were lucky in not doing these little people more harm than breaking a cow’s leg and a church. They are all so brittle!”



“Shocking,” said a china charwoman with arms akimbo as she watched them go.

“Did you hear that great flesh girl’s parting shot?” exclaimed a china churchwarden. “No more harm than breaking a church’! The very idea. And even then the church took second place after a cow’s leg. What luck that I happened to be outside, other-

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wise I'd have been smashed too in the fall of our church."

"But what are we going to do?" cried a china chambermaid who was always very steadfast in her devotions. "I've got no place to pray now with Old South Church gone. We can't just leave it at that!"

"No," said the churchwarden thoughtfully with chin in hand. "We'll certainly have to see about reconstruction. We can't do without a church even if those intruders apparently can."

"'Reconstruction'?" put in a china chieftain. "What do you mean by that? All we can do is send for the mender—and he's never had to take on anything the size of a building before. I doubt he can cope."

"You may be right," admitted the pensive churchwarden. "'Tis very grievous to be thought upon."

"Hey, mister," cried a china child, pulling on the warden's coat tails. "What dumbbell planned our country anyway?: making us live inside a great big china dish where we're all sure to break if we ever fall down. Look!" The little boy in knee pants pointed to his shin, which was disfigured by a long crack and some faint traces of glue. (Like many children he was not fond of washing and the dried glue remainders had been hanging on there for many weeks.)

"Oh, that was the Lamebrain," replied the churchwarden, prepared to instruct. The reference, a jocular-fond one, was of course to Laym F. Breign, one brilliant inventor who had dreamed up the China Country ages before but then hadn't been able to think of anything fitting to do with it. "But I'm afraid it's far too late to call on him to do any reconstructing here. The last I heard he had got involved in inventing plots so complicated they could only be resolved at the last by the intervention of *dei ex machine*, so he spends all his time with gods and goddesses now. He's had no time to come near us in centuries."

Some of the China-Countrymen, stirred by curiosity about the strange people from the outside world, had been following the group of tourists at a distance. They now came up to their compatriots at the wall. M. Andrew Joker led the contingent and

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the little china Chihuahua tailed after them. There was even a china Chinaman in the crowd.

The Clown said:

"I've got an idea.

Say so if I'm wrong.

But I started to think,

So I tagged on along.

Those people that passed:

Made of straw, flesh, and tin.

They shouldn't be living.

They are. What's the gen?"

"I'm not sure I take your meaning, Mr. Joker," said the churchwarden gravely.

"Well, one wouldn't expect people not made out of china to be alive. And yet they are. I think there must be big magic available in the outer world where they come from. What if we made an expedition out to see what we could find to help in rebuilding our church?"

"Oh," deflated the Princess, "we'd stiffen up at once. Like I told that flesh girl: 'Whenever any of us are taken away our joints at once stiffen'."

"We don't know that, your grace," returned M. Andrew. "None of us have ever *been* taken away, that I ever heard of, and if some were we never got any word back about what happened to them."

The Princess retired into a sulk at the doubting of her dictum and said no more. But the thoughtful churchwarden opined, "It might be worth a try. We could lower somebody over the great wall of china and *see* whether he stiffens up."

"I volunteer," said the clown. "I'm so cracked anyway I'm practically expendable."

Enthusiasm for the idea swept the crowd and nearly all of the china people made their way to the china village, where there were a few shops. At the hardware store they acquired china hooks and ladders and then went on to a place where the encircling wall was lowest. It was no time before Mr. Joker had clam-

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bered up and there he sat on top of the wall and said, "Oh, my!"  
"What is it?" cried the others, full of curiosity.

"It's all red on this side," reported the Clown. "What a strange effect. It seems to be built of all sorts of queer substances. I can't see any china at all." He leaned out further to see where the wall met the ground—and then the china people heard a shriek and he disappeared from view.

"Oh, heaven!" cried the China-Countrymen. "How terrible. He's been cracked in a hundred shivers!"

Unmindful of his dignity the Churchwarden scrambled up the china ladder and looked over. "No, he's not," he called back. "He's not even cracked in one shiver. Mr. Joker!" he cried. "How are you?"

"Fine," said the clown. "Never better. You know what? It's soft! on this side. Wait a minute." He stood on his head and promptly fell over. "See! Not a break, let alone a crack. It's marvelous. I don't know what this red stuff on the ground is but I love it."

M. Andrew tumbled about in wild abandon, turning hand-springs and cartwheels. Then he stopped suddenly and shouted, "I haven't stiffened up! Not a bit of it! Come over and see!"

Those of you who are used to greenery being green may wonder what the "red stuff" was. But of course in the Quadling country there isn't any greenery, just reddenery. Virtually all the trees and bushes and grass are red. In fact, *everything* is shades of red except, rather unaccountably, inside the dainty china country, where it appeared to be mostly white. Now the sight of so much cheerful redness fairly bemused the Clown as he gazed around him while some of his compatriots made their way to the top of the wall.

When quite a little group had got straddling the wall the Churchwarden and the Chieftain pulled up the china rope ladder and let it down on the outer, Quadling side. Then they joined the clown, even the little purple dog, whom someone had thoughtfully lifted over. His name was Purpupplio—usually called "Purp."

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“Isn’t it grand, this red stuff!” said the clown, boldly pulling up a handful of grass.

“Oh, take care, sir!” cried the Princess. “You don’t want to spoil the decorations.”

“I think, you know,” said the churchwarden, “these things are growing. And I think that material is called ‘grass’ — and it will grow again.”

“‘Grow’?” echoed everybody. “What’s that?”

For in the Dainty China Country nothing grew. Everything was just as it was: fixed and shiny and brittle and unchanging.

The churchwarden had read a few china books and he was able to explain at least some of the strange phenomena the china people encountered as they strayed away into a fascinating red woods — which consisted of course mostly of redwoods.

The vast trees totally dwarfed the tiny pottery people, who indeed were no bigger than the smallest dwarfs to start with. When they had got around behind the first redwood tree they could no longer see their white china wall.

Soon they were hopelessly lost.



The day when Lurabelle Ladybug flew to the lake was perfect in every way. There were soft balmy breezes, plenty of sunshine, and a faint odor of orange blossoms drifting over all. As she approached the lake the first thing she saw was a large white stately swan teaching her little yellow cygnets to follow her around in a circle and to hold their heads in the regal manner of all swans.

One little baby swan seemed to be getting very tired and lagged behind the others, so Mrs. Gloria Swan gracefully ducked under water beneath the weary little one and came up carrying him on her back between her wings.

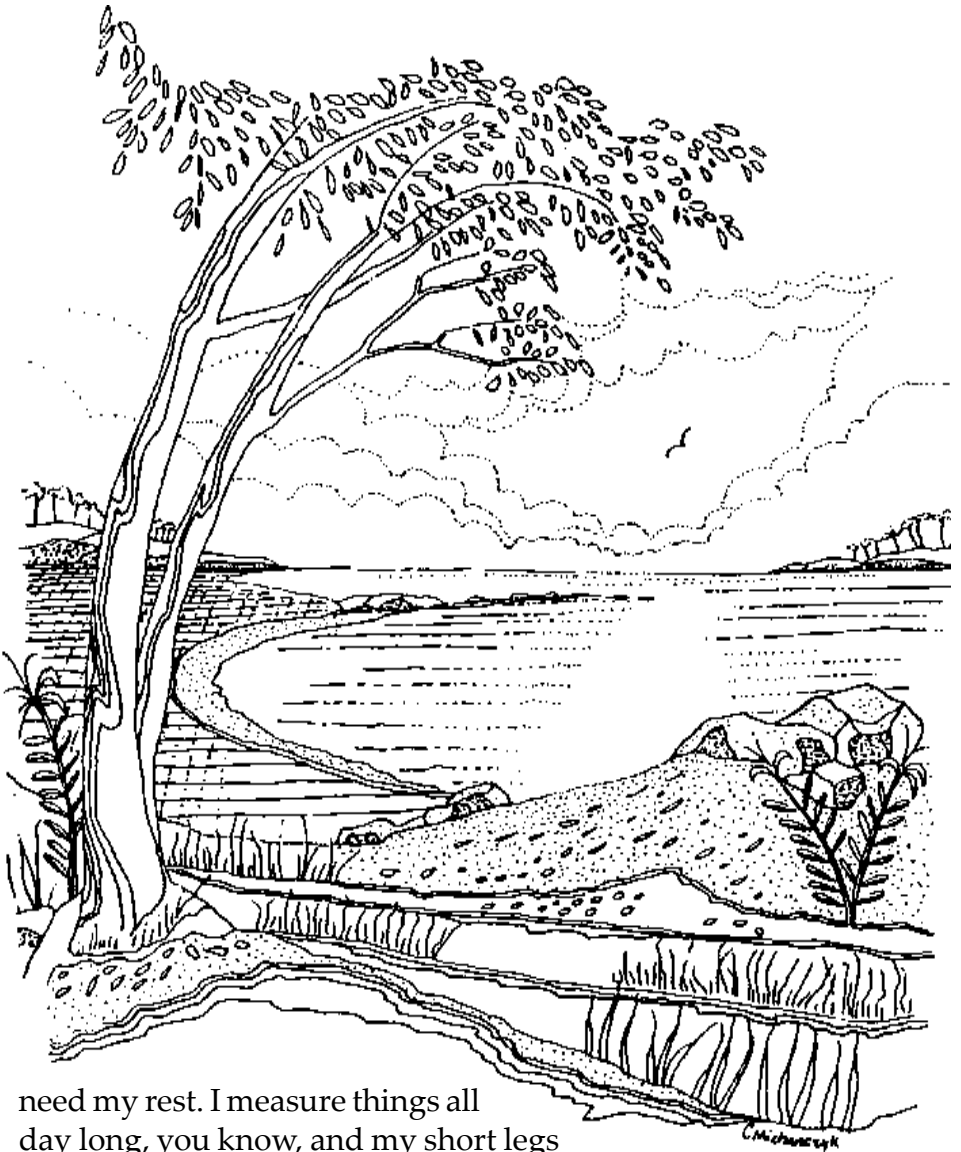
"How clever of you," said Lurabelle, swooping low over the charming family scene. "I never would have thought of doing that, even if I could swim."

"One can't," said Gloria Swan, "be too careful. When I take my children into the water I must keep close watch to protect them from all kinds of dangers. While they are so tiny some larger creatures consider them a tasty meal."

Just then Eureka the pink kitten came strolling along the nearby shore. She watched the swans with interest for a little while. 'I think, if I tried, I could catch a baby swan—just for fun,' she said to herself. "I wouldn't hurt him, of course. I'd just hold him between my paws and listen to him talk. But then, I detest getting my fur wet, and Mrs. Swan would probably give me a terrible beating with her wings. It's not really worth the effort. No, I think I'll look for my old pal Tim Inchworm instead and have some more fun with him."

Quick as a flash Timothy's psychic mind, away off under the hibiscus bushes, picked up Eureka's thoughts and they brought him wide awake where he lay among the lush leaves. "Oh, no! Not again!" He shuddered, remembering their last go-round. "I must reason with her. Perhaps I can reach her by thought waves."

'Eureka, dear Eureka,' he thought with all his mental strength, 'please leave me alone. I'm not even half your size, and I do



need my rest. I measure things all day long, you know, and my short legs get very tired. To get your exercise you can run and jump and climb trees and chase butterflies. You really don't need me to bat around the way you did the other day.'

The pink kitten at the lakeside, suddenly struck motionless as she became aware of the inchworm's thoughts said to herself: "That's strange. I didn't even know that worm had a brain, let

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alone feelings. What an awful cat he must think me.'

'Of course I'll leave you alone,' she telepathed back to him. 'I wouldn't really hurt you for the world. Now that I know you have feelings I'll never play cat and worm with you again.'

Comforted by the pink kitten's message Timothy Inchworm settled down on his bed of moss and twigs and was soon lost again in meditation and dreaming.

Meanwhile pretty Bettina Butterfly had been flitting hither and yon from one blossom to another. Presently she noticed Lurabelle Lady-beetle perched beside the lake.

"Hello there," she said and waved a wing at Lurabelle. "You must be new around here. I haven't seen you before."

"That's right," said the ladybug. "This is only my second day here and I think I've already fallen in love with the place."

"Have you met everyone already?" asked Bettina. "Well, of course you haven't met me yet. I'm Bettina Butterfly. My friends call me 'Bettina' for short. You can too, if you like."

"Bettina," said Lurabelle. 'That sounds all right,' she reflected, and aloud went on to introduce herself and to answer the butterfly's original question. "Let's see now: I've met the Reverend Foldinglegs P. Mantis and Timothy Inchworm—and then I've seen or heard about others. I know, for instance, that that's Mrs. Gloria Swan out there on the lake, and a little while ago I noticed a pink kitten on the lake shore just here. I understand she's a holy terror. And then there has been mention of a big fat green thing who spoils the poinsettia leaves—"

"Oh, that's Clara Caterpillar," said Bettina nonchalantly; "you don't need to worry about her. What about Stella Stick-Insect?"

"Why, no, I hadn't even heard about Miss or Mrs. Stella. Is she nice?"

"Mmm, so-so," admitted the butterfly. "I'm invited to a soiree at her place tomorrow. Want to go along?"

Lurabelle was thrilled to be getting into the social swim so soon in her new home region and accepted with alacrity. "Is it far?" she asked.

"Oh, around on the other side of the lake," informed the

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butterfly. "But you're a good flier, aren't you?"

"For short spurts," answered the lady-beetle. "If I can just stop and rest a moment between dashes..."

"Oh, that's all right. We'll follow the shore route so you can light when you want to. I can always sip a little nectar while I wait. It's all garden around here."

"Splendid," concluded Lurabelle Ladybug. "Would you like to call for me at home in good time to get there?" And she gave the pink butterfly her new address.

The china people set out on their expedition with a vengeance.

As it happened, they never did find the way back to their great wall but at least they had presence of mind enough to keep together. After some hours of fruitless wandering they stopped and took counsel.

They elected the Churchwarden their president and made a virtue of necessity. What they had posited more or less in jest became their business in earnest: they would search the wide world over to find some strong magic to solve their problems at home, or at any rate some strong glue to stick their church back together again.

Before long they came out of the red redwood wood and that in itself was an achievement. The red light of evening was darkening fast and then night was upon them. The china people didn't mind about that. They never had to sleep, or even could! The darkness did inhibit progress a little but on the other hand they had discovered that tripping over things and falling down did them little damage. The ground was soft and resilient everywhere, even on the dirt roads they sometimes crossed. This softness was a great marvel to them, who had never seen anything in their whole existence that was not hard and shatterable.

"What if we could get some of this wonderful stuff—" mused the china charwoman, "grass', you call it?—to grow in our country? Then living might not be quite so hazardous there."

"Alas," regretted the Churchwarden, recalling his reading. "Nothing can grow on a china surface. It appears that somehow for things to grow there has to be free connection through to the deep soil below. It all has to do with the rain falling and elements in the ground getting converted into the substance of flesh and plant-fibre. Very complicated."

"Thank goodness for our own clean permanent gleaming substance," sighed all the Chinas with satisfaction.

"But still it *would* be nice with something soft underfoot at

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home. Is there nothing that is soft but yet doesn't need rain and soil and things to function?"

"I've heard of something called 'rubber'," said the warden, "but it must be a magic material. Once it exists it seems to be stable, resists dampness and rough treatment, needs no upkeep. But it does have a drawback. It will burn."

"Then that's the stuff for us!" cried the Clown, "because fire is a thing we have absolutely no occasion for in our china land."

"Let's away!" cried the Chambermaid and the Chieftain with enthusiasm, "to find some magical rubber!"

That proved a bit harder to do than to say. The party traveled for many days, among hills, along streams, across meadows and marshes. Being so small it took them much longer than it would have done for fleet flesh animals or even man. They avoided roads, where they might be seen by possibly fault-finding travelers, but one afternoon the lie of the land obliged them to come out into the open at a crossroads in a melancholy region of heath and bracken.

A weatherbeaten wooden sign hanging from a crossarm post creaked in the wind and caught their attention. "The Old Magicity Shop" read out the churchwarden. The chinas' fate was sealed.

But *how* charming. The gingerbread roof of the little old wattled cottage hung nearly to the ground. The bottle-glass windows bulged in the bay, and behind them could be hauntingly dimly made out things that glowed alluringly in the evening halfflight.

The Chieftain strained on tiptoe to reach the bell-pull, then far away somewhere they could hear a tinkling of fairy bells. The china princess turned to look at the west where the last sun threw into radiance a few beautiful scurrying clouds: white and yellowy orange, but dark grey in their centers. Perhaps there was something significant in her gesture. Then she turned to follow the others into the shop.

Behind the time-worn wooden counter grinned slyly an old-fashioned magician with the obligatory crooked nose and long

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knobbly fingers. He was dressed in a sorcerer's robe with moon and stars on it and wore a tall black pointed conjuring hat. Though in fact he might only dispense magic over a counter he looked as if he was prepared to *work* magic.

"Oh, good evening," said the china churchwarden. "We were passing and noticed your shop. As it happens, we're in the market for one or two magical items. I wonder: do you have any rubber?"

"Rubber?" cried the shopman in a creaky voice. He was startled. "But this is a magic shop. We scarcely stock anything as mundane as rubber."

The churchwarden in confusion didn't like to confess that somewhere someone had blundered in his/her assumptions about rubber. "Well, then, glue?" he hastened to substitute. "Heavy-duty, structural, *magic* glue, of course, or possibly cement."

"For what would you be requiring it?" asked the wonder-dispenser. He didn't often get calls for glue.

"We have a church that was demolished by a huge flesh lion's tail. It's too big an operation for our local glue-mender. We need something more large-scale, with scaffolding and the proper tools and then a team of workmen to carry out the job."

"Well, I do—very occasionally—farm out work on commission. Let me see now." The shopkeeper took down from a shelf a heavy ledger and leafed among the parchment pages. "'Scaffolding', I suppose;" he muttered. "Now then: 'rituals'... Rivette, Aunt'... 'robots'... 'Rose Kingdom'...S—S...'Rosicrucians'... 'Rubber World'—say, they might have something for you, after all... 'runes'..'Sacrifices, Inc.'... 'saints'... 'Satan'..."

Meanwhile the china folk were examining with fascination the wares displayed in bins and on shelves about the shop. The Chinaman pulled the strap of a big red-and-silver-wrapped cracker and a host of tiny goblins boiled out of the device and with hideous though faint screeches flew on bat wings to the cobwebby upper corners of the room and hung there, gibbering. The Charwoman took hold of a broom that immediately

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began to waltz, with sweeping gestures, to the tune of Dukas' great work. And the counter-man glanced up from his researches just in time to glimpse the china child picking up a big white flit-gun mechanism from a display table.

"Oh, have a care! have a care!" fair screamed the clerk, dropping the Suppliers' Catalogue. "That's the demagicifier!!"

But it was too late. The knee-pantsed boy pushed the plunger and a cloud of white spray, of a heavenly fragrance, shot from the gun and quickly pervaded the air. The china people all stopped in attitudes of interest and amazement.

When the spray cloud cleared in a few minutes the people were still staring in wonder and delight. Even thirteen years later they were still doing it.

"Tcht, tcht," said the shopman as he went around gathering up the little figures and arranging them tastefully on shelves. "I *tried* to warn them." He picked up the china child, which still clutched the big white demagicifier. "I'll just let him carry on holding it," he decided. That would help to keep the instrument from being operated by any other too-curious visitors who might drop in. He reached for the china Chihuahua and gave it a polish with his coat sleeve. That piece he determined to place in the show window. It was so charming it was sure to attract customers.



The engaging but at present somewhat distracted little lady-beetle was flying along anxiously. She had lingered too long at the party of Stella Stick-Insect and now she was afraid she might not get home by dark. But the conversation had been *so* stimulating and the refreshments (aphids in aspic so delicious)! They had got on the topic of names and nomenclature and both the ladybug and her hostess had complaints about their own names. Neither was satisfied.

"Oh, 'Stella' is all right," admitted the partygiver with a moue, "but 'stick-insect'; that isn't a name, it's a description!"

"Nut, my dear, it's so distinguished with a hyphenated name," protested Lurabelle Ladybug, "like, say, 'Fitch-Worthington' or 'Sackville-West'. At least, so I've heard."

"I think it's just awkward," disagreed her hostess. "Like with the term 'United States'. That's not a real *name*—that is to say, like 'Spain' or 'Arabia'; it's a descriptive label, and the proof is that you can't form the necessary associate words from it. You can say 'Arab' or 'Spaniard' but you can't say 'United Statesman'. And what about an adjective? 'United Statesly'? or 'United Statesish'? No such thing. And the same with 'stick-insect'. Why, even 'louse' has 'lousy' and 'grub' has 'grubby'—but you can't say 'stickinsecty'. No, it's tiresome!"

"At least," consoled the lady-beetle, "people know what your name *is*. What about me? In those same United States you mention I'm called a 'ladybug' while in England the word's 'lady-bird' but neither is any good really because I'm not what the English consider a bug nor the Americans a bird!"

"At least you are an insect," affirmed Mme. Stella. "The poor spiders can't even say that. Perhaps you'd better settle for 'lady-insect' ...?"

"As you do with 'stick-insect'? Hmm..."

But then our heroine noticed the angle of the sun and got in a hurry to say her adieux. Lady-beetles are rarely seen at night and that's because they do need daylight to be able to fly effi-

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ciently. So now Lurabelle Ladybird (on balance she decided she liked “bird” better than “bug”; there *was* that distasteful over-tone of “bedbug” about the latter!) flew off into the sunset.

Yet speed as she might she was benighted. In the last blue of evening she could just see to make her way in among three waving straws ahead. She’d simply have to make do with that harborage for the night. How annoying. Still, there was nothing she particularly had to do at home on the other side of Lake (actually, pond) Quad. She gripped a straw and settled herself for sleep.

That was odd. The straw — or wiry stalk of grass — was moving. Oh, not simply bending in the evening breeze. Actually being transported from place A to place E! Lurabelle opened her eyes and strained to see. No good; too dark. But the three straws, the lady-beetle herself, and the ground whereon they rested were definitely in transit! Was it an earthquake? If so, it was the gentlest, most continuously on-going one she’d ever been in.

Then she heard a voice. The ground spoke. “Are we nearly there?” it said.

““There’?” replied a second voice at some remove. It sounded curiously like a cat’s speech! “We’ve just got started!”

“Oh,” said Lurabelle’s moving firmament.

“You’re not tired, are you, Woozy?” asked a third and solicitous-sounding voice.

“Oh, no. Just bored.”

“Well, let’s talk then,” said yet a fourth voice. “That’ll pass the time.”

“That’s a good idea,” said number three. “Won’t you tell us a story, Woozy?”

“Oh!” After a slight pause, “Story-telling’s not really my line.”

“I for one would like to hear more about Ojo’s quest. Was the boy allowed to go on it in the end?”

“Go on his own quest?!” said one of the cat voices again. “Well, I should hope so. That’d be the day!”

“When do they start out?”

“Tomorrow.”

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“And which way will they go?” Toby (yes, it was he) rather hoped it would be in the same direction as his own party was heading, i.e., south. Otherwise he didn’t see how they were going to be able to “help” much.

“Into the yellow country: the Winkies’. Ojo’s got to tear the wing off a yellow butterfly to complete his magic spell.”

Lurabelle Ladybird was so shocked at rearing this announcement that she lost her grip and fell right off the Woozy’s tail into the deep grass below.



Cats can see in the dark. That was fortunate. So can dogs to a large extent. Even woozies can when they put their minds to it. Our friends had waited 'til late afternoon to make their get-away from the Palace of Magic. When Lake Quad had been circumnavigated and the lights of the city left behind they were glad of their see-ability in darkness. They hurried along and had covered many miles before something rather awful happened.

They suddenly heard the loudest crack of thunder any of them had ever experienced. Just moments later the night sky opened and dumped a small lake on them. The cats spat furiously but swam. So did the Woozy, after a fashion. The china dog said "Glub, glub" and sank like lead. So did the lake as well as it dispersed itself out across the countryside in a relatively few minutes.

Fortunately the first pinkish grey of dawn was just about to appear and that helped the friends to find each other in no more than an hour of scrambling through the rich red mud the cloud-burst-had left behind. Before they found each other completely, however, they found someone else. This was an inordinately tall lean man, really just little short of a giant, who came striding along the sticky red gully that had formerly been a country road.

The Pink Kitten noticed him first and paused in her licking operations. It was fairly hopeless amidst the mud but she was trying her best to clean herself up. Eureka was always rather fastidious. "Mew," she said, and the giant looked down.

"Another casualty?" said the man in a voice like Abraham Lincoln. He paused and took out of his pockets some hedgehogs and hares and things he had already rescued from watery graves. Now that it was beginning to dry out a little he could safely let them go. "I'm sorry," he said.

The kitten was surprised. "What about?" she wondered.

"This sudden fall of water," he explained. "I'm afraid it's my fault."

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“Oh? How so?”

“Let me introduce myself. I’m Rod Litenin. True to my name I seem to attract lightning—and other things. I see the inside of a lot of rain clouds in a year.”

As she studied the towering figure Eureka could see that his head and hands were covered with scars and burn marks. His shapeless clothes were patched and frayed too. They were also wringing wet. He was pretty much of a mess to look at. And yet somewhere the cat sensed a strength.

“That’s too bad,” sympathized Eureka. “Still, I guess we’ll survive. Have you got time to help me find my friends? One of ‘em’s here.” She indicated a lump of red clay beside the road; that would be Toby. “But the others seem to have got washed away.”

“As I say: my fault. Sure; it’s the least I can do.”

With his talth Rod Litenin would spy out a very much wider range of terrain than could the low-built kitten and it wasn’t long before he found the Woozy and the Glass Cat condoling with each other at the edge of a copse.

After thanking Rod for their rescue the Woozy said, “What’s that haunting fragrance?” He seemed to have a thing about haunting fragrances, and often they were ones not suitable for presentation in the drawing-room.

“You mean like burning rubber?” said Litenin shamefastly.

“Mm, that’s it. With just a suggestion of sauerkraut thrown in. Actually it’s quite fascinating,” and the Woozy moved near for a closer sniff. The glass cat said nothing. She couldn’t smell anyway.

“I’ll tell you,” vouchsafed Rod as they made their way back to the road where the others waited. “I had a store where I offered everything in the world made out of rubber. In fact, I called it ‘Rubber World’. Then, as usual, lightning struck it and it all went up in smoke—and I do mean smoke. I struggled quite a while to rescue something from the flames but when it looked like the whole place was going—I came away. Since then I’ve been smelling like burnt rubber.” The man was being a bit disin-

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genuous here—but more of that later.

The animals could care less about Rod's queer smell. Either they couldn't smell it (glass cat and china dog) or else they didn't mind. And otherwise they found him an amiable gent. Kind to small animals and that.

They sat in a row on the roadbank and tried to dry out in the dawn sun. Now that the violent storm had had its go it looked like going to be a fair day. Rod Litenin wiped off Toby and Bungle with a big wet bandanna, and then they were all right. The kitten and woozy took a bit longer. Then Toby said, "What about you, Mr. Litenin? You're still soggy wet."

"Oh, just call me 'Rod'," said the man. "It's quicker than 'Litenin'. But don't mind about me being wet. I never dry out completely. That accounts for the cabbagy smell: mouldy clothes. They don't get dry before I get overtaken by another flood or what-have-you."

"Gee," said the china dog. "Thunderstorms, fires, floods. Do they just happen to you?"

"Not 'just', I guess," Rod admitted, "but mostly. Don't know why it is. It's always been that way. But what? Me worry?"

"Nice attitude—if you can keep it up."

"The way I see it, you've got to. If you let disasters depress you, you're got at double: the physical misery of whatever happens plus the mental suffering laid on top. There's only one thing that is real cause for distress and that's loss of health. Here in Oz we can never die, so even bad health is not a complete calamity. So: why worry?"

"I think I differ with you," said the Pink Kitten. "What about shame, disgrace, dishonor? Those are real reasons to grieve, and they're nothing to do with your health."

"That's easy," said Rod. "You just never do anything dishonorable or shameful, so you're safe."

"But what if you're accused of something disgraceful anyway?! It hurts even if it isn't true." Eureka spoke from experience.

"One can't waste time with the slanders of malicious people,"

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pronounced the wanderer. "If *you* know you haven't betrayed your honor nobody else's accusation matters. A great poet said it." He took from his pocket a little battered waterlogged leather-bound book. "'To thine own self be true'... That's called 'morality'."

"'Morality'?" The animals hardly knew what he was on about but it was nice there in the hedgerow under the mild morning breeze and they could afford to sit on a bit and natter.

"Yes," Rod Litenin pontificated. "Morals are ways of behavior you accept as being right for yourself; and morality is simply sticking to those ways. That's easy enough to do. If you think lying is all right, then it isn't immoral for you to lie. If you think dancing on Sunday is wrong, then it's immoral for you to dance on Sunday. It's all being true to yourself: that's morality."

But even the glass cat was aroused at such heresy. "Morality, schmorality," she puffed. "Some things are just *wrong*: as you say, lying—"

"To spare somebody's feelings? when the issue is trifling?"

"Killing—"

"A chicken for Sunday dinner?"

"Stealing."

"A loaf of bread when you're starving?"

"Cheating someone who trusts you!"

The tall stranger was silent. *Some* things really were unforgivable! and every right-thinking person knew it.