
c h a p t e r t w e n t y - t h r e e

Yes, now it was better: The sun gleamed on and as the day advanced and their exercise was prolonged—the two girl travelers were no more discommoded by the cold. By a little after three in the afternoon they saw the first stones: grey-purplish boulders whose surfaces rose above the level of the snow. By four they trod on pebbles.

And all this while they had seen no people. That was what struck Ozma as eeriest of all. That lonely house at the crossroads had been the last sign of habitation for scores of miles in this most desolate region of Oz. There was no village, no signs even of charcoal burners in the forest. But now that too would change.

“Look!” said Ozma and pointed to foot-marks in the inch-deep frost. The two girls looked behind them and saw, where they two had walked, three lines of footprints. Lana trembled.

They went on and now foot traces followed theirs on both sides and more joined presently and ever more. By late afternoon the couple became aware that grey silent people marched beside them. The girls ought to have rejoiced but somehow they did not. Why did no one speak? either to our travelers or to each other. The

THE FAIRY QUEEN OF OZ

silent wayfarers moved so slowly too. Tired and stiff as they were after their daylong trudge Ozma and Lana pressed forward much faster.

The Oz princess had some idea by now that, hastening ahead, they two would presently catch up with the leaders of the multitude. Hour after hour, with simulated gaiety and dancing step, she forced the pace. At full dark Ozma and her companion were obliged to droop onto a fallen log and catch their breath. The princess heard her little friend murmur:

“In a stolid crowd
with cares of the world on them,
not one dared stand out.
She danced along,
eyes flashing, beguiling,
setting everyone smiling.”

“How beguiling can you get, my dear!” laughed the older girl. “I haven’t seen one person smile yet.”

“You know my verses are about wishes, your grace,” disclaimed the poetess. “Not quite about things as they merely are but as I would like them to be.”

Ozma didn’t quarrel with that. She only encouraged the younger girl to gather up her courage because it seemed as if they must carry on by night. Not yet had any house or settlement been seen, just the rocky ground and the sparse stunted-looking trees of the highland forest. The ice of the plateau had been left behind but not the plateau itself.

Luckily the night was full of stars and they could see to make their way. Did they not have an impression that their ghostly companions gleamed ever so faintly phosphorescently in the dark? At least Ozma by starlight could see to pick up a fragment of one of the thousands of stones they found under foot.

“Look, Lana,” said she with wonderment in her voice. “This is no ordinary bit of rock outcropping. This stone is carved! See its square corner.”

Miss Peethisaw marveled, and then she had an idea. “There must have been marble cities here on this upland in ages past. I

wonder what happened to them.”

“I wish the ancient history of Oz were better chronicled,” bewailed the Queen. “I’m sure I don’t know what places these were. I must take a leave of absence and go read up Witch Glinda’s great book of records from the very start. But even that only goes back as far as 1234 O.Z...”

The pair struggled on until an hour before dawn. They did reach the vanguard of the great horde of shadow pilgrims who clustered about them but found no leader or elders or wise-men there. Such were still to seek, it appeared, for somehow it was borne in upon them that the silent multitude was in search of just such a charismatic leader. The way still led imperceptibly upward until, just as they saw the morning star, the ultimate ridge was reached.

The night’s adventure seemed to stir the young poet’s inspiration strangely. Perhaps she was getting a bit light-headed with hunger too and lack of sleep. At any rate she dropped down at last at a flat rock where there was an infinite view into the blue south and wrote these lines:

“Templed cities shone white
in cold starlight.
From the highest valley
the people looked back
at the ruins they left
on their march to the peaks.
It was a thousand generations before
when their ancestors
trod clogging mud.
They struggled upwards
and on the pinnacle
wondered where to go.
They were shown a sign
intruding among blocks
of unearthly silence.
It was a star, the largest and nearest,
shining from afar.”

THE FAIRY QUEEN OF OZ

Ozma in her strapped-on traveling crown and palest green - even if sadly stained and worn drapery was looking every inch a queen as she took up the notebook and, standing, read from it, aloud.

Then most marvelous to behold: little Miss Lana turned her gaze from her sovereign and looked about. On every hand the silent pilgrims had stopped, had turned, and, far as the eye could span on that scrub-grown mountain edge, they were facing as one man toward the gentle fairy princess who had shared, nay, led their long wandering.

c h a p t e r t w e n t y - f o u r

“That’s it!” gasped Billina and flopped back in the corner of her crate, bowled over. “Oz! And Teentyweent!... I thought the name of your island was not altogether unfamiliar. Yet I knew I’d never been here myself and I couldn’t think who could have mentioned it. The Wizard!”

“‘Wizard’?” queried the island birds and rose to flap their wings, then settle on the upper slats once more.

It took Billina about half an hour (during which she became quite hungry again) to tell the oft-told tale of the Wizard of Oz. Well, of course a smattering of the story had reached the ears of the birds already, by animal hearsay, from that period when Oz natives had spent time on Tinitiwinitihumunu’ahonomua as inmates of the boarding school. But not ‘til now had the later saga of the Nine Tiny Piglets of Teentyweent been reported back to their temporary home island.

“This is tremendous,” cried Patatipiipiapaatapapita. “We ought to let the Teentyweentians know. It would relieve their minds to find out that the pigs got back safely to where they came from after all.”

“Let them know?” asked the hen. “But this is marvelous. Can you speak the language of the island humans?!”

“Our civilisation is high,” again declared Patatipiipiapaatapapita, “but else not that high. No.”

“How can you ‘let them know’ then?”

“Oh, we could fly in a body into the nearby village of Liddlebiddy and attract their attention—at least enough to get them to follow us back here. When they see you they’ll be ever so excited and get you out of your prison at once. Then you can tell them!”

Billina gave a squawk of pure frustration. “I can’t speak to them—any more than you can yourselves. I’ve already been cast away once this trip for lack of being able to manage in plain Humanese...”

She trailed off in dejection. At least she had not fallen into the vulgar error of supposing that since everything on Teentyweent was wonderfully small the place was probably at least minimally magical as well and she looked for no quick solutions. But then she had an idea “The nine Swynes! What was the language of instruction in their school?”

“Interesting you should ask that,” complimented Patatipiipiapaatapapita. “Apparently the piglets were quite clever: they *understood* Humanese but they couldn’t speak it themselves, at least here on Teentyweent,” (‘Just my predicament,’ thought Billina) “but the headmaster had studied abroad under the famous Dr. Dolittle—and he can get along in any number of animal tongues: Feline, Canine, Avian, and of course Porcine. We sometimes have a natter with him ourselves. That’s how we pick up the odd bit of town news—”

“Could you get *him* out here?!” demanded the hen. “Then we might get somewhere.”

The birds were excited—but thoughtful too. “Tiny Town is on the other side of the island. It’ll take longer than trying to fetch the locals would. But yes! Prof. Humuu’u will be thrilled to get word of his missing pupils. We’re sure he’ll come...!”

All a-twitter, the greater part of the bird delegation rose, circled,

THE FAIRY QUEEN OF OZ

and winged away toward the north.

Alas, so it turned out the tide came in again before Prof. Humuu'u could get down to the coast. It was a spring tide and the wind was offshore. When the schoolmaster reached the spot where the crate of the yellow hen had rested he saw only a shining expanse of sea-polished sand.

c h a p t e r t w e n t y - f i v e

“Sad grey light dawned
on the arid pine forest.
A line of pilgrims
toiled upwards
in the silence
with eyes fixed
on the mountain top.
Whether beggars,
haughty rulers,
or important burghers,
they aimed for discovery,
hope, and an audience
with the gifted lady
of the mountain
reputed to be in contact
with mystic existence.”

Yes, as the day broke the pilgrims pressed round Ozma's place and silently made their plans. The Queen spoke back to them, kindly, sympathetically, with consoling words which seemed to

soothe them, make their anguish fade, put them at rest, so that when the sun stood high and every shadow was gone—well, every shadow was gone.

“I never realized before that I was ‘in contact with mystic experience’, Lana,” said the girl ruler. “Thank you for pointing it out.”

“It stood to reason, didn’t it? You are the sovereign of everything in Oz and that includes not only the living.”

The queen pressed the little girl’s hand very tenderly and said, “I shall not be remiss in my duty there again.”

Thus lauded artistically Miss Peethisaw, in the bush that followed, again put pencil to paper.

“It was so quiet a leaf
fell like thunder to earth
and among the broken columns
people awoke to dawn.
Drifting with the leaves
they were the living dead:
descendants of trailblazers
discarded by progress.”

Ozma observed and approved, then she turned and cast an arm wide. “This is the last of the Gillikin country, Lana. That is all Munchkinland down there.” She indicated blue distances that from the foot of the cliffs stretched to the horizon.

Presently the two Ozites scrambled down the rook face. That warmed them up after the night’s long march but also tired them that much more. It was with gasps and groans of exhaustion and relief that they crawled into a bosky blue thicket at cliff-bottom and pulled it in after them. The blue grass beckoned like a feather bed and they slept almost before their bodies touched it.

Long on in the afternoon the couple woke. Now there was to be no gainsaying their ravenousness. But happily by now they were back ‘in civilization’ and they stood not upon the least ceremony in knocking at the first farmhouse door and stating their near-desperate need.

Of course the Munchkin family received them with every kind-

THE FAIRY QUEEN OF OZ

ness, even without being told that any of their unexpected guests was the very queen of Oz herself. (Ozma with forethought hid her battered crown among her draperies.) Without actual fibbing the travelers succeeded in giving the impression that they were a lady and her niece who by unspecified means had become separated from their companions. 'More than separated,' suspected the kind housekeeper, 'more like through the mill. I've never seen two more disheveled people.' She scarcely allowed them to dawdle over the dessert before demanding that the visitors stop into the cast-iron bath while delivering over to her their garments to be scrubbed and mended.

"Oh, but that would take hours," protested the elder girl. "We cannot impose—"

The farm woman shushed her almost rudely and displayed the handsome steam iron she would presently have recourse to. "You'll never notice the time passin'," assured the hostess. "You'll be asleep."

After many days of privation two nights' worth of sleep in twenty-four hours is not more than is very welcome. When Ozma and Lana saw the vast down-stuffed baldachin bed they were to share, it struck both of them as the most delightful thing that had fallen in their way since they had left Cut-out County.

Next morning, all the difference in the world having been made, the grateful pair took leave of their hosts with many heartfelt expressions. Ozma made a mental note to send the family a year's supply of bottled ozade, once safely back in her palace. Aloud she said, "We're making for the yellow brick road. Is it far?"

Still a day's march, perhaps more, they were told. But clean, fed, rested, and presentably attired the girls thought they could face anything. In fact they turned out to have to face very little until, in the late forenoon, they heard a clattering thumping tattoo behind them and turned to see the Sawhorse rushing toward them, pulling Ozma's own red wagon, at whose reins sat the grinning little Wizard of Oz.

Such an unbelievable sight caused the queen of Oz to be completely flabbergasted.

c h a p t e r t w e n t y - s i x

Billina's only consolation, as she staved a sad and lonely farewell to Tinitiwinitihumunuo'ahonomua, was that at least, while missing meals herself, she probably wasn't going to become anyone else's. The chance of meeting gallinapophagous individuals on the open ocean was minimal. Such might well infest the waters beneath her but from these she was protected by the slat floorboards of her coop.

No, there was just boredom to look forward to, until she should meet somebody, or, more likely, some subsequent bit of ocean shore. That and hunger. She remembered all too well how famished she had grown during the three wave-tossed days between the *Klondike* and the beach at Teentyweent. Billina cocked her head and looked one-eyed down at her plump form. Well, she couldn't see that she'd lost any weight *so far*.

The trip was boring: the first two days. After that, curiously, things picked up. Billina noticed it first when she woke once from a snooze and saw that all was no longer blue about her. Part of it was white. Her crate was progressing so rapidly through the water in an easterly direction that it was casting up a ridge before

THE FAIRY QUEEN OF OZ

her and leaving a white wake behind. It was, in fact, the hasty sloshing of sea water through her vessel that had wetted and wakened her.

What could the reason be? Chicken coops adrift at sea didn't *head* anywhere. They just float, wherever the winds and tides carry them. Could it be winds and tides at work now? she pondered. No, there didn't seem to be more than a normal mild breeze blowing, and not at all that easterly anyway. As for the tides, it stood to reason that the waves couldn't propel anything faster than they were going themselves.

Something was thrusting her onward and it was not just a force of nature. Coming from Oz, Billina at once thought of magic. Being in the Pacific Ocean, she at once forgot it. No magic around here. If there were, the hen might well have expected the benefit of the use of a tiny bit of it the time she had stood in the presence of an actual confessed fairy, but there hadn't been a wand in sight then or any incantation of the slightest use invoked when she was in extremis.

No, she had to look for a corporeal agent and that could only be in the waters beneath her. She cocked an eye at one of the narrow rifts in the capable carpentering that made up the floor of her cage. Was there a paler shape against the ocean dark that suddenly flashed across her sight and was gone?

For fun as well as profit she squatted down by the widest crack and trained a permanent eye on whatever might visibly move in the water below. Before more than a minute or two had passed she was certain: white waving things like arms! were passing and repassing under her cage. Sometimes she thought she saw slick pearl-grey bodies too. Then once, behind the craft, a bottle snout was briefly visible, moving at express train speed and casting the box forward before it on a wall of water.

Later Billina got the fright of her life. She had by now been rushing forward for so many hours in that unaccountable way that the first excitement had paled and she subsided into a corner for the night. Perhaps she had slept for three hours, perhaps more, when a change in the manner of her moving forward waked her.

It was like when you go to sleep to the accompaniment of some deafening noise. When the noise stops, the silence wakes you. So the hen woke now, because there was no surging up and down any longer but only a smooth forging forward, almost like the feeling of standing on the deck of a ship that makes its way over a millpond sea.

What could it be? Sharp chicken eyes served for nothing. The night was cloud dark. The visible world was invisible. All was black as a night could still be black in 1908. Nothing was hurting her though. Billina could even note with pleasure the warm dry wind, from forward propulsion, that breezed through her cage. Lulled, she fell asleep again.

It was when she woke by daylight that she got her shock. Though the sky was light grey all was still black beneath her. Billina had heard of a Black Sea but never a black ocean. Besides there were no waves on this ocean. What was more: there was no water in this ocean. She seemed to be riding on—if not dry, at least only damp—land.

A wild glance farther afield and then she saw—and fainted from the shock. She and her crate were riding serenely on the back of a vast black whale.

c h a p t e r t w e n t y - s e v e n

“Would this place do for lunch?” asked the Wizard.

Princess Ozma thought that the blue bank of the Upper Munchkin River would do better than most places and so the Wizard erected a small marquee there, using a page from Lana Peethisaw’s writing pad. He hadn’t yet acquired any great facility in creating whole pavilions out of Ozma’s pocket handkerchiefs; besides, the little queen had lost her handkerchief during the course of the awful sandstorm.

Over the celery and blue cheese Wizard Diggs offered explanations. In fact, Ozma never did completely understand the sequence of events in the rescue mission, which struck her as having followed much the same course as the old conundrum about how to get all the soldiers over the river in the rowboat with the strictly limited capacity. There was the virtually untranceportable Magic Picture, the need for a vehicle to carry passengers but the absence of a means of impelling the vehicle, the known position of some of the missing persons, and the unknown location of others.

The start of it, at least, she did grasp. “After seeing you off at

the Old North Gate I naturally followed your progress in the Magic Picture," recalled Diggs. "But after a day or so, when everything seemed to be going fairly routinely for you, I confess I grew slack. I believe more than half a day had passed without a 'tune-in' when suddenly in the dead of night I recalled my dereliction and sprang out of bed to hurry in my nightshirt to the Hall of the Picture. What was my horror when, upon asking to see you, Your Majesty, I discovered you tumbling head over heels through the air in a frightful dust storm.

"I'm afraid I panicked. I rushed back to my room and seized a box of wishing pills from the bureau drawer. Pausing only to throw around me my old zodiac cloak—which I sometimes drape over the bed as an extra spread—I swallowed a pill and wished myself into your presence—"

"I *thought* I saw wizards in the wind at one point!" broke in the little poetess, "—although the ones I noticed had long beards. You didn't happen to have thrown on a beard too, did you, Mr. Diggs?"

"Not at that point, my dear," confessed the Wizard. "Later there was no end to the dodges I had recourse to. I remember when we were trying to rescue the Scarecrow from the renewed clutches of the Flatheads.

"Chronology, Wizard, chronology," prompted Ozma as she sipped a huckleberry juice cocktail (made with a dash of sour cream, just to lighten the indigo hue). At this time she was still trying to keep track of the order of events with some precision.

"I still was not thinking in a responsible manner," Diggs continued to confess. "Otherwise, with another pill, I'd have wished us all safe home in the royal palace."

"Just as well you didn't, my friend," soothed Ozma. "Presumably at that point you knew nothing of little Lana's having joined us. She might have been left to blow about alone through that terrible night. That would have been great pity."

"Ah well," murmured the Wizard and beamed his gratitude for this sop to his conscience.

THE FAIRY QUEEN OF OZ

“As it was,” he went on, “I continued to panic and merely wished *myself* safe home again, and even then the rest of my stock of pills blew away in the whirlwind.”

It took all the lunch hour to retail the saga of the still essentially student-magician’s fumbles before at last he got his show effectively on the road. There was the story of the wogglebug riding out the storm high on stratospheric thermals and then making his way on own wing-power back to the Emerald City. There was the problem of how to get the red wagon to where the Sawhorse was or else the Sawhorse to where the red wagon was. There was the mission to rescue the Scarecrow from Flat-head Mountain (easily recognizable by Professor Wogglebug from what he saw of it in the Picture). All through, the Wizard was keeping tabs on his queen — and her unexpected new companion — but though he could see her clearly enough and wept to witness her trials and discomforts he couldn’t make out her whereabouts more exactly than that she was somewhere in the purple country.

When at last the original team of explorers (though minus all its female participants) had been brought to safety and O.Z. Diggs had bethought him to avail himself of his patented where-is-scope, it was a matter of less than a day to get on the trail of the errant ladies and track them to the banks of the Munchkin River.

“Tell me, Wizard,” said Ozma, drawing a line under all those confusions, “in your comings and goings in and around the palace did you happen to see anything of Billina the yellow hen? I sent her on a mission but much to my surprise I’ve heard nothing from her.”

“Why, no, your grace, I’m sorry —”

“Or of any unusual influx of fairies? Specifically in fact, Lulea, queen of them all?”

“Had I but done that, your highness, I would have lost no time in beseeching her aid in this tangle.”

“Mmm, I thought as much. Well then, no more but this; let us make all possible haste back to the Emerald City. If Billina cannot bring the fairy queen I must have recourse to other means.”

“Oh, er, Your Grace,” mumbled the wizard, once more embarrassed. “Would three extra hours—say four—put out your plans unconscionably?”

Ozma smiled. “Now that you mention it I suppose time really doesn’t matter that much. I have urgent tasks in hand but I don’t know that speed will help. Rather diplomacy—and detective work. What is it you have in mind?”

“You know the nine tiny piglets?”

“Of which one belongs to me? How could I forget them?”

“I’ve always meant to seek out their parents and reassure them that the pigs are alive and well and living in the Emerald City. Now that, at last, we’re so close it seems a shame to miss the opportunity.”

“Close? Do the pigs’ parents live around here? In Oz!? I always thought...” Ozma’s voice trailed away in the effort to recall.

“That they came from the island of Teentyweent? That’s what the sailor said from whom I bought them. You can imagine my amazement when, after the ten of us reached Oz and the piglets found their voices, I heard from their own lips that they were natives of this country after all.”

“How quite incredible,” breathed the girl ruler and feared that she was in for another tale of wanderings and coincidences that was going to tax her powers of belief. She didn’t ask for details but simply said, “I hope the pigs have been back to visit their family,” and looked quite stern for her.

“Oh, yes!” Diggs hastened to reassure. “Even your favorite, Pigmy, times when he’s been away to participate in table tennis tournaments, has extended his absence to cover a night with the old folks. Only alas...”

“Yes?” pursued the princess.

“I’m sorry to say I myself have never taken the occasion to come way off here to this outpost of the country to pay my respects.”

“I understand, O.Z. Say no more. We shall be pleased to lend our presence to a state call on—”

THE FAIRY QUEEN OF OZ

“The Swynes. Professor Grunter Swyne and Mrs. Squealina Swyne.”

c h a p t e r t w e n t y - e i g h t

The fairy hummingbirds completed their circuit of the Hawaiian island by a visit to the Barking Sands. These were a stretch of coastal earth that had the odd property of giving off a squeaking or “barking” noise when you trod on it. As hummingbirds Mme. Fay’s followers couldn’t tread to any great extent, nor were they much more convincing as treaders in the shape of gossamer fairies. Hence, just for half an hour they turned themselves into elephants and rhinoceri. Then there was treading enough and to spare. Oh, how those sands barked. They’d never barked so much before, because the incidence of elephants in Hawaii is virtually nil.

Just before the local Kanakas got out spears and blow-darts with which to confront the unusual animals the whole fairy band switched back to hummingbirds and returned to Honolulu.

By now they felt they’d fairly done the Sandwich Islands, where after all they had been for more than a fortnight. One and another of the fays had expressed a desire to see how things were going on in the Forest of Burzee. Secretary Feebimble was, in addition, feeling some concern about the whereabouts of the three sisters

who had missed the boat, or rather the train, at Stockholm. These had ultimately got in touch with their queen via telepathy, helped out significantly by recourse to their two-way wrist radios. (The powerful queen fairy, expert in the use of the globes and adept at manipulating light, dark, and anti-matter, had naturally been among the first to avail herself of, and improve upon, the techniques of wireless, once the rudiments of these had been worked out.)

The three truants had ended up in the oddest places. One had found herself on a bleak shelf of rock near Tristan da Cunha. Bored with the exclusive companionship of albatrosses, rook-hopper penguins, and inaccessible island raffle, she had early signaled her intention to return to Burzee, there to await the eventual return of her sisters. Another was having the time of her life playing the roulette tables at Macao. And as we know, poor Petalutha had hung around Penn Station for days in vain before finally taking a cheap walk-up flat in the Bowery, where she expiated in pointless poverty her silliness in mistaking directions on her first setting out.

It was the latter whom queen Fay, when she had been reminded of the case by her devoted secretary, now intended to look up and gently detach from durance more or less vile. There was no great hurry. "Je m'amuse merveilleusement!" she exclaimed, lapsing into French for no obvious reason, and went on to explain that she was having such a good time that she wanted to spin out the days in the Pacific, while yet conceding that she and her supporters might begin to trend in the general direction of New York.

That's how they happened to be down at the docks on 22 June, looking at the posted notices of arriving and departing vessels. What a lot of famous names! though, to be sure, perhaps not one of these ships was the celebrated *original* bearer of any given appellative. They remarked the *Ark*, the *Dove*, the *Savannah*, the *Mary Rose*, the *Great Eastern*, the *Mayflower*, the *Niña*, the *Pinta*, the *Santa Maria*, the *Victory*, the *Half Moon*, and the *Mary Celeste*, but the listing that struck all fairy eyes, except just those of the Queen, was "*Lurline (II) (maiden voyage)*"

THE FAIRY QUEEN OF OZ

"Hm," said Fay, when her attention had subtly been drawn, "'maiden voyage.' *that* one ought to be up to date and comfortable enough. 'Passengers and freight. Accommodation for fifty-seven.' That's not very many, is it? We'd take up more than half the places ourselves, if we went normal-human-size, and I suppose we must, under the circumstances."

"What if we went as crew?" suggested Calabash.

"'Crew'?" said Mme. McQueen, turning in surprise. "In what capacity?"

"As musicians," replied the musical fairy.

"But, darling, we none of us play, except the virginals of course—and except yourself," the queen added, vaguely recalling that *somebody* had used to perform as one-woman band on harp, flute, and tuba in the old days when the fairies would dance madly by moonlight in Burzee.

"But don't you see? they could learn!" cried Calabash, now all fire and flame. "By a wave of your wand you can propagate my knowledge of threnody in the brains of all. Finger facility will follow along as a matter of course."

"Well, we'll see," allowed the queen. "If there's not room for all twenty-eight of us among the passengers, it might be an idea."

As it turned out, the fairy horde were dispersed about equally among passengers and crew. The end portion of *Lurline's* maiden run WAS popular with customers so there were only about a dozen free berths left when the fairies presented themselves at the ticket office. On the other hand, *Matson Navigation* scarcely needed twenty-eight musicians to entertain forty-two passengers.

With their instruments (hastily recruited from pawn shops) stowed behind the curtain in the salon, the fairies went on deck. There was undeniably an air of fiesta about the lei-draped ladies and the gentlemen in yachting jackets and white ducks who clustered along the quayside rail of the ship. A hula band was playing *Aloha Oe* on the deck and paper streamers were thrown. A thunderous hooting split the air and the engines began to throb.

The fairies, most of them, succeeded in insinuating themselves among the other passengers along the rail. For the time being no

one knew which of them were travelers and which were crew. There was a great deal of merry noise and yet not so loud but what Butterfly presently left her hard-struggled-to position of vantage and went to squeeze in beside queen Fay a little further along the line.

“Yo’ Highness?... ‘Scuse me but would yo’ lean out a mite? See dere, ‘long to de lef’? dem two gals in white? It’s a mahty cu’yus ting but ah heard ‘em talkin’ — and yo’ know what day was talkin’ ‘bout?... Oz!”

c h a p t e r t w e n t y - n i n e

Princess Ozma was not as irresponsible in the face of contending crises as might appear, when she accepted an invitation to pay a social call instead of dashing home to attend to business. The first thing she did when there came a lull in the Wizard’s continued bout of reminiscing was to borrow his crystal set and put in a call to Glinda, great and good — and powerful — Sorceress of the South and ruler of the Quadlings.

“Glinda dear? Ozma here. I’ve got into rather a mix-up. I went off pretty impromptu to have a look at the Winkie-Gillikin border. Were you alert to the fact that up north Winkieland occupies a sixth of what one would have expected to be all Gillikin territory? that is, along the northern desert border of Oz.”

“It’s been like that for ages, dear,” confirmed the sorceress. “Has it got worse?”

“I should say so, yes,” stated the fairy ruler ruefully, “on the evidence of the dust storm I’ve just been through.”

“I’m afraid those happen quite frequently,” said the good witch. “I rather tend by now to skip the descriptions of them in the Record Book.”

THE FAIRY QUEEN OF OZ

"Well, they're pretty bad," insisted Ozma, "and I for one don't think they ought to be allowed to go on—"

"It may not last, Ozma," asserted the southern sorceress. "I have reason to believe we may be nearing the end of the Winkie proliferation cycle—"

"Whatever do you mean?" Ozma, still a neophyte ruler, didn't know *ALL* the ins and outs of Oz cosmogony.

"In my researches I've come across tantalizing hints of a process that may have been going on for millenia: actually back beyond Goorikop's intervention in Oz affairs—not to mention those of Lurline-that-was."

"Hm," said the Oz queen speculatively. "Lurline—or Lulea as she's been calling herself for some time: she's what I was signaling you about. But go on—with your—er, explication."

"The Oz colors," said Glinda a trifle unexpectedly. "You know what they represent, of course."

"Well—or." The girl ruler had to confess herself somewhat stumped. Her reading hadn't progressed that far if indeed the Royal Library she had inherited contained any volumes on the topic at all. "Aren't they just arbitrary? Whatever popped into Mr. Baum's head when he had to fill out the background of the sketchy story that Miss Dorothy retailed to him?"

"Oh, gracious, no," laughed the sorceress. "The colors are what they are, if not for a purpose, anyway with a signification. You do appreciate that your four kingdoms represent the traditional elements of earth, air, fire, and water?"

"Yes, of course." Ozma bridled a little over the wireless.

"Well, the Munchkin country, water-richest of the lands, is naturally blue—"

"I see. And you all are red down your way because of 'fire'... And that's why you've got so many volcanoes too." Ozma was no dummy.

"Exactly," the witch concurred. "Winkie yellow represents earth—"

"Odd. I'd have thought brown."

"Quite so. Although we tend to think of brown as a separate

distinct color it's really no more than very dark yellow. That's why there's no brown in the rainbow which is made up of cardinal hues in their purest manifestation. And of course the Oz colors would be in their 'cardinal' form."

"Hm—and Gillikin purple then?" wondered the Oz princess.

"'Air', of course. But since air is colorless it's a little hard to symbolise in a hue. However, because air, at least in terms of life, is the noblest of the 'elements' (be the others what they may, life couldn't exist without air), no doubt it is fitting that it should be represented by the noblest color. Hence too, the mountains, of course, as the emblematic geographical feature of the land: 'purple mountains' majesty' reaching to the airy heights..."

"All very neat," said Ozma. "I'm persuaded. Do go on."

"Apparently there's more to it," related Glinda. "I'm coming to the conclusion that there are geological epochs when these topographical features go a bit on the rampage, and in a clockwise direction, for some reason. Among the earliest traditions is that of a great flood, or floods. That would be the Munchkin element in operation. Then, right within the historical era, there were long-drawn-out periods of volcanic activity, centered here in the south. How long the Winkie 'earth' expansion phase has been going on I've no idea but perhaps right from the end of the volcanic epoch."

"Oh, dear," commented the girl ruler. "That all sounds a bit bigger even than I feared. I can't do anything about it of course, but I had some idea that Queen Lulea, once the case was put to her, could manage to put a damper on those winds, which appear to be the vehicle of the unfortunate phenomenon. But if this is all part of something cosmic..."

"Don't underestimate Lulea's competence," warned the witch. "She's only a woman, of course—if non-human creatures can be termed 'women'—or 'men'—"

Ozma broke in with some (ladylike) indignation: "I'm an immortal myself and yet I also think of myself as a woman ...or girl."

"All right! Let's say 'woman.' Furthermore the good Lulea can also behave a bit scattily at times. However, we must give the

THE FAIRY QUEEN OF OZ

fairy her dues.. her power is greater than that of mere deities (often male) who identify with human beings and also occasionally work miracles. *Everything* a fairy does is a miracle and though these acts may often be limited to trivia, like wish-granting and personality transformations, when the chips are down the capabilities of a really top-rank fairy can be characterised as cosmic, indeed."

"That's good to know," declared Ozma earnestly. "You've relieved my mind enormously, Glinda. Thanks so much. But I'm afraid I'm still a bit: uneasy. You see, I sent Billina off—you remember Dorothy's yellow chicken—to try to alert the great Lulea. It's been days now! I'm badly worried that something may have happened to Billina herself..."

"Put your mind at rest, dear," comforted the charitable Good Witch of the South. "I'll be onto it this minute! with a general alert to fairies of land, sea, and air to watch over the bird wherever she may be."

“Fantastic,” said Mme. McQueen and looked at the two nautically dressed teen-agars along the rail. “Talking about Oz, you say?”

“Dey sho’ is,” assured Butterfly.

“What’s so surprisssing about that?” put in Ereol, who liked to think of herself as chief fairy (after their queen herself and always tried to stay near her leader as being her second-in-command. She had overheard the whole exchange. “It’s well known that the Ozzz books by now are famous evvverywhere, especially in America. Every well-read young girl would know of them, and those two look quite intelligent. I expect they’re their favorite books.” She fingered her spirit (which for the moment subsisted in a couple of blue and yellow marbles) confidently.

But Butterfly came right back. “Yo’ nevah heard wut dey was sayin’! One o’ dam gals talk lak she done *been* in Oz.”

“Fascinating,” agreed the Queen. “Which one?”

“Dat one wid de yellor ha’uh,” Butterfly pinpointed.

At this moment the *Lurline* at last began to edge away from the quayside and the attention of the three fairies was distracted

THE FAIRY QUEEN OF OZ

toward the crowd on shore, whose cries of farewell increased in volume and excitement. When they looked again, the two mortal girls, objects of their attention, had disappeared.

But Queen Fay's curiosity had been piqued. She kept the teenage pair in mind—and in sight, whenever one or the other or both would appear on the deck or in the gangways of the *LURLINE*. The second day out, while at dinner—if not actually *AT*, still very near, the captain's table—the fairy sent a note to Calabash leading the all-girl orchestra. The note requested her follower to direct the players in a tune of the Burzee queen's choosing. Then Mme. McQueen leaned back and kept a watchful eye out.

At the captain's table two girls were toying with their charlottes russes. A person always ate too much aboard ship and by the time they got to their dessert they had almost lost interest. Talk had dwindled too and when the music struck up a livelier tempo one of the girls began to hum along with it. "What fun," she broke off. "That's one of my favorites."

"Oh? What is it?"

"That's the funny part. I can't think of the name of it. Wait a minute—" The girl began to follow the tune with words:

"Come on and dance it! We're doin' a new step!

It really is new. It's a fresh-as-the-dew step.

A lively one too. It's no sticky old glue step.

And it's not a fake. It's an honest and true step.

Everyone loves its no pride-of-the-few step.

Christians and Moslems and many a Jew step.

The animals dance it and call it the 'Zoo Step'—

"Oh, how queer!" gasped the girl with the yellow hair and sang on as if bewitched:

"It's the yellow and purple and red, green, and blue step.

Well, what do they call it?! Why, that's the Oz Two-Step!"

Dorothy stopped as the orchestra went into a da capo at an even more frenzied pace. She leaned forward and stared at the leader with big eyes. How in the world—?

"What is it?" said Lurline excitedly.

"That song—or dance, really. How on earth could this band

know it? I last heard it at Ozma's reception at the Emerald City last summer. The Nine Tiny Piglets performed it, each one singing a line. It was the big hit of the season. But an Oz tune couldn't possibly be known to musicians here."

Miss Matson was equally impressed. After all the weeks, going on years, of talk the two had had about the Land of Oz and whether it existed (Lurline's constant question) and yes, it did! (Dorothy's always answer), this was the first time anything had happened that incontrovertibly tended to prove there really was a place called 'Oz.' Dorothy had demonstrably known the words of a song that the San Franciscan herself had certainly never heard. This was something that could be investigated.

Lurline got to her feet, crossed the floor to the bandstand, and waited 'til the last rousing note of the Two-Step blared out. Nothing daunted (as daughter of the owner of the line) but agreeably courteous (as became a well-bred young lady), she plucked the leader by the sleeve.

The girl made a lively pantomime of silent clapping, then gushed: "I *love* that tune! I couldn't stop dancing—my feet, that is, under the table there. Tell met has it got words? It's brand new to me."

Calabash was charmed but also, appropriately, somewhat abashed. Mme. McQueen had not been at all specific about how far she, Calabash, could go in presenting an artifact unmistakably Ozian. But after all, what could the words to a popular tune hurt? "Thanks so much! Well, actually there *is* a lyric. I'll have one of the girls render it for you."

"Oh, would you?! How smashing! By the way, what's your name? On the menu it only says 'Haunting strains of the Fairy Pipers'."

"Calabash," informed the band leader. "Er Cab Calabash," she improvised, aware that both a first and a second name were standard in the world she temporarily occupied. "And that's Dolly Dreamsweet who's going to sing for you now."

Without appearing to, Lurline, back at the table, over the nuts, listened carefully to hear if Oz and (what even she by now knew

THE FAIRY QUEEN OF OZ

were the Oz colors would also be mentioned by a musician in the employ of the Matson Navigation Company. That would prove that Oz existed at any rate somewhere besides in the imagination of Dorothy Gale and, evidentially, the Reilly and Britton Company.

"...the red, green, and blue step'," sang Dreamsweet. That tore it. The cloud of doubt burst and conviction rained down on the mind of Lurline Matson. Oz was real! And what's more, these musicians were *from* Oz. Suddenly she knew it in her bones!

"Dorothy!" she hissed low. "Do you know those people?"

"Who?" The Kansas girl was still lost in a reverie of speculation.

"The band! The girls that are playing. Look close!"

"I've been looking. But no, not a face seems familiar. How come?"

"Well, you know everybody in Oz. It just occurred to me these people might be...er, Ozites."

"Then you do believe, Lurl?! At last!! Oh, I'm so glad! But no, actually I've never seen any of them before. And besides! I *don't* know everybody in Oz."

"Don't look now, but what about that woman at the next table? She seems to be pretty thick with the band leader."

Dorothy peered, unobtrusively. But the frequent Oz visitor had never had the pleasure of meeting queen Lulea in Oz, though of course over and anon hearing tales of the fairy's exploits through her great chum, the regnant Princess of Oz.

"I think there's more here than meets the eye," declared Miss Matson with pondus. "I'm going to do some detective work."

c h a p t e r t h i r t y - o n e

Relieved, Princess Ozma shook the reins gaily, determined to force herself to have fun. Billina could almost surely be counted on to be safe, and otherwise nothing was pressing too awfully on the Girl Ruler's conscience. Here in the heart of Munchkinland it was easy to forget the extent to which great forces of nature were conspiring to make Winkieland take over Gillikinland.

"Mr. Wizard," said Lana Peethisaw, as the blue breeze whipped her curls, "will you tell me about the pigs?"

"To be sure, my dear," said O.Z. Diggs, taking it easy on the back seat beside the little girl. "You're fond of pigs?"

"Well, animals in general," confessed the girl. "I never had any of my own. I'm partial to hippopotami—but it was considered inconvenient to have any at home."

"And pigs are related to hippos," fell in the Wizard genially. "I see the connection."

Which was more than Lana did. To cover her confusion she said, "I've written about hippopotami—"

"Do tell us, Lana!" said Ozma enthusiastically. She was overhearing attentively as she guided the Sawhorse along the yellow

THE FAIRY QUEEN OF OZ

brick road.

The poetess obliged.

“I may be an ignoramus
But I know a hippopotamus
When I see one,’

Said the little girl in blue.

‘Oh, you will forgive me, darling,’

Said her teacher (fearing quarreling)

‘But your stress scheme

In that word will never do,

For the accent falls on ‘-POTam-’

And it really is the bottom—

Not to say “the pits!”—

To emphasise the “A”.’

‘My apologies, dear teacher,’

Said the darling little creature,

‘But I only said

I know how hippos *look*.

How they sound’s another matter

And I’ve never heard one natter

And I haven’t looked them up

In any book.

For the nonce I’ll stress the “-pot-” and

Wait until a hippo’s got an

Opportunity

Himself to have a say.’

‘Charming child!’ approved Miss Wilcox

As she fumbled with her pill box—”

Lana seemed going on indefinitely in her recitation, when Ozma, perhaps feeling that the little girl had delighted them long enough, broke in to say, “What’s that up there a head?”

The others dutifully peered forward along the road but could discern nothing out of the way. But the princess had spoken literally; with a gay laugh she now pointed upward with her whip, saying, “There!” and indicating the tops of a stand of blue-gum trees with which they had now drawn level.

It WAS a head. Over the highest tufts of the trees they could just make out a pointed face that looked down at them quizzically as it rotated its jaws in chewing fashion.

Ozma pulled on the reins. The Sawhorse didn't actually need such physical constraint (not to mention the use of the whip!). His dear ruler need only have said "Stop" and it would have sufficed. Everybody, horse and people alike, was interested in looking further into the matter of the head above the trees.

"Hi!" called a jaunty voice.

"Exactly," Ozma called back. "You're the highest thing we've seen all day. Do you live up there?"

"Oh, no, only my head is in the clouds. I've got my feet on the ground."

With that the head disappeared down behind the dark blue leaves and a moment later they heard a drumming sound and a fine young giraffe cantered into view. At least, it moved quickly in typical undulating giraffe fashion but with a stiffness, a gawkiness, in its stride that was unusual. It gave the wise-becoming young ruler of Oz an idea and when the animal had drawn near she said, "Have you been here long?"

The giraffe stopped short and a blank (but always cheerful) look spread over its face. "Funny you should ask that," it called down. "I *haven't* been here very long, and I don't know how—" A sudden expression of grief, almost of horror, filled up the blankness on its face. The tall creature made a couple of tentative moves with a right front leg and a left rear one. Then a big tear leaked down its face. But again abruptly, "Never mind," it said. "I'm here now. Then I saw those gum leaves and I thought I'd have a taste..."

The giraffe's voice trailed off. "You know what?" it said with renewed brightness. "I never talked before either! I wonder..."

"Don't trouble about that now," advised the fairy princess. "Later you'll want to think it all over quietly. But for now, will you tell us your name?"

"They called me 'Gerry' at the zoo," stated the animal. "The last thing I remember was some people saying, 'Oh, Gerry'—" Suddenly, "Who's that?" he asked and without standing on

THE FAIRY QUEEN OF OZ

ceremony lowered his head to the level of Lana Peethisaw's hat brim. (In 1908 it was unheard of to go outdoors without a hat—or at least a crown—on, so the kindly farm family had outfitted both girls with headgear. Gently the giraffe's long velvet lips lifted the hat off Lana's head so that he could get a look at the face underneath.

Lana shrieked with delight and instantly transferred her preference from short fat animals to a tall gangly one. "Ooh," she crooned and something made her compose furiously for a moment.

"I saw a giraffe
And I wanted to laugh,
But I couldn't, you see.
Something stuck
In my throat when I tried
And I very near cried
And my feelings at once
Ran amuck.
That giraffe grabbed my hat
And the moment that that
Occurred something inside
Me went 'click!'
Now I stand and adore
And I'm hoping for more:
To be friends and to
—never be sick..."

the poet concluded somewhat unexpectedly.

"'Sick', Miss P.?" asked the Wizard, but the giraffe had lifted the hat high and was mumbling it with soft lips, juggling it so it stood on end, and seeming to plan to eat it. But this was illusion; it never used its teeth. If it had, Lana's blond straw with the blue ribbon would have been shreds in seconds. Instead, Gerry lowered the hat gently and dropped it on the little girl's head again.

The Wizard's question got lost in the shuffle but Ozma knew.

c h a p t e r t h i r t y - t w o

Further friendships were being forged about the same time. Dorothy Gale became great chums with band-leader Calabash and secretary Feebimble and "second in command" Ereol. She seemed to have an affinity for those close to a throne, as she liked to feel she was, herself. Lurline Matson (without even realising it) went right for the one *on* the throne, and perhaps that was the attraction of likes as well.

It began with the captain's daughter unobtrusively keeping an eye out for the (as she was to learn) fairy queen's appearances on deck. The latter was always accompanied by a bevy of attractive girls. The Californian had found out from the purser that the ladies were traveling together and were the manager, staff, and star pupils of a secretarial school. The leader was a Mrs. McQueen.

Though Lurline had more than once observed the directress looking in her direction with a questioning and friendly eye the woman was never alone and the California girl, though usually so forthright, somehow hesitated to push through the crowd merely to drop an obviously conversation-starting remark.

The weather solved her problem for her. The first days out of

THE FAIRY QUEEN OF OZ

Honolulu had been placid but during the fifth night the seas got up. The heiress awoke dismayed to find her cabin (shared with Dorothy) going up and down in an unsettling manner. However, she supposed she'd found her sea legs and she managed to make her way to the dining saloon with her chum. There she had to say "No, thank you," to almost everything the waiter suggested and remained picking at a grapefruit. But when she saw the big stack of pancakes with syrup and melted butter that Dorothy proposed to eat (against a background of swaying chandeliers) she abruptly excused herself and made her way on deck.

The wind wrapped her skirts about her legs and tossed her auburn locks in every direction as she studied the whitecaps intently. Then she heard a throaty voice beside her.

"Feeling the waves?"

Lurline looked and groaned. The fascinating woman from A deck! and herself in this deeply embarrassing position. She had thought she couldn't feel worse but she did.

"Perhaps a little Coué will help?" said the woman and laid a cool left hand on Miss Matson's brow. The suffering girl didn't see her pluck from her luxuriant, though wind-blown, coiffure a long pencil and gesture peremptorily with it. All she knew was that suddenly she had never felt better!

Lurline nearly staggered with the relief. She leaned against the rail and turned and looked at her deliverer marveling. "Is that Coué?!" she said.

"A form of it," said ex-Lulea, fibbing slightly.

"Whatever it is, it's magic!" declared the girl, and she was certainly right there.

Well, that was the beginning of the great friendship. The two descended to the little dining hall together, where Mrs. McQueen's staff were buzzing agitatedly over her having given them the slip that way. The fairy queen brooked no nonsense. She made her way majestically to the Captain's table, whither Lurline Matson had invited her. There was room. The captain wasn't there. He was ruling the waves on the bridge.

Lurline ordered a stack of hot cakes bigger than Dorothy's had

been, *and* some greasy sausages. Miss Gale marveled, but smiled, to see her friend so confidently restored. She too was interested in meeting the beautiful lady from the other table. Up to now, however, she had no particular reason to connect Mme. McQueen with her orchestra friends (all of whom had proved very coy about admitting any personal connection with Oz).

What was her astonishment then, after names had been exchanged (some form of these were already known to all from the pursuer's records), when, on an enquiry after home towns, the business college proprietress calmly stated that she was from a place called "Burzee."

Dorothy nearly dropped the loquat she was having for dessert. "Pardon me!" she gasped. "Would that be 'the Forest of—?!"

"Why, yes," said ex-Lulea. "Don't let it get about," she whispered, "but my girls and I are traveling in disguise! We do stay, normally, in the Forest of Burzee. Not L.A., as was stated to the ticket agents."

Connections were made abruptly in the Kansas girl's mind (while Lurline listened fascinatedly, although eating). "So you and the orchestra ladies..."

"Yes. All one," admitted Madame, without, at the moment, giving further details.

"Oh! Good gracious sake," cried Dorothy. "You're the Queen of the Fairies!!" She had stopped eating completely.

Ex-Lulea nodded complacently. "I know I can trust you girls to keep our secret. You see, I know that you believe. What's more, I know you know the magic continent yourself. That's why I've been so very curious to meet you. I can't conceal my fascination. How...?"

"Why, I'm Dorothy Gale!" declared Dorothy Gale.

"Yes, I caught your name," assured the fairy. "But what I was wondering was how you came to know about Burzee personally."

Dorothy blushed. Apparently she was not so famous as she thought she was. How humbling to have to say, "Well, you see, a tornado blew away the house I was in and accidentally killed a

THE FAIRY QUEEN OF OZ

witch in the fairyland of Oz—”

Mme. McQueen, contrite, laid an earnest hand on Dorothy's. “*Forgive* me, my dear. So you're *that* Dorothy Gale?!... I have an awful memory for names. For instance, at the moment I can't remember what my own name is—”

“Why, ‘Mrs. Fay McQueen’,” suggested Lurline, getting in a word.

“No, we only thought that up the week before last. No!—” she turned to Dorothy again urgently, resqueezing her hands “if you recall the name of the Queen of the Fairies, don't tell me! It turns out that I'm in a fugue from that name. I don't care to remember whatever it was it would remind me of. I shall presently be taking a new name, but for the moment my traveling alias, ‘McQueen,’ will do.”

Well, they remained talking Oz for ages, until the busboy absolutely insisted he had to clear the table. Then they went on deck. Happily the high wind had leveled off and the sea was now no more than averagely choppy. The three girl-ladies stood right up at the prow gazing out to sea but really seeing nothing, because in their minds' eyes the scene was filled with emerald towers, as they talked about the most fascinating topic in the world: Oz.

And yet they were not *totally* absorbed, for one of them, Queen Lulea-that-was, suddenly stopped in mid-word and exclaimed: “Now this is really too marvelous.” (She was being a little bit disingenuous, for it was in fact partly the result of her own spells that what was about to happen was about to happen. “Do my eyes deceive me? Or is that a chicken crate I see bobbing on the waters down there?”

It *was* a chicken crate.