

## C H A P T E R                      S I X

On the far side of the island jungle the winged ones espied a yellow house. Well, 'yellow': it was faded yellow on one side but bright on the other. The reason for the dichotomy was apparent as soon as the travelers flew nearer. A couple of Gillikin workers stood on scaffolding, painting the house with care. Their purple outfits contrasted pleasingly with the butter-colored paint they were applying. This area along the Winkie River lay near the Gillikin frontier and the newcomers at first supposed that thrifty householders had hired cheap labor from over the border.

It was a talking house (thus, in miniature, Dot got her wish to hear buildings speak). Its doors seemed to function as mouths. At the moment the house was protesting: "That hurts! Oh, I do wish you would stop doing that!"

"Did you hear that, professor?" called Dorothy. "That house is talking!—just the way I wanted the Emerald City to do!"

The Wogglebug nodded but changed the subject. "It's coming on for evening. What if we invited ourselves down for a visit at that dwelling? The people might prove hospitable."

"Oh, goodie, yes." Dorothy was nothing loath. "You heard him," she relayed the proposal to her bearers.

So hearing, Clover and Sunnodil and the red and blue flies

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(nameless here forevermore) flew down to the house, taking care to avoid the swatter-like flapping of the screen and front doors which seemed to serve the building as vertical lips for articulating.

Now the (smaller) voices of the two Gillikin painters, one of each sex, were heard to say: "I don't understand, Patricia. The more we carry on painting, the more the house complains. I don't know why. We're not hurting it!"

"You're right, Zedria. I have no use for a complaining house. If there's complaining to be done, I prefer to do it myself."

The visitors had landed not far away. Now Prof. Wogglebug, virtually invisible to the normal-sized Gillikins, approached them, flying to the level of the scaffolding and buzzing in their faces until they took notice. "Hello," he ventured. "May I present myself and company? I am H.M. Wogglebug, (T.E.), and these are my companions: Clover, Sunnodil, and other students from Wogglebug University — no doubt you have heard of it? Oh, and there's Princess Dorothy of Oz and Kansas and the well known dog Toto. I think that's everyone. Perhaps we can be of assistance...?"

Dorothy didn't listen to the replies of the two painters. She was fuming inwardly — and was that the sound of her gritting her teeth? After all she had done for, and been to, the highly magnified Wogglebug! and now to realize that she ranked second in his estimation after some hayseed fly students at his U. Had he forgotten that she had done her own studies at their alma mater and taken her degree?

It was long ago, admittedly, but not to be neglected. Angrily she pulled her hair in frustration, like Barbara Bel Geddes in *Vertigo*.

However, her breeding as a Princess of Oz won out over her irritation. Dignifiedly she spoke: "The house talks, Professor — as we've already noted. Do you think the same thing could have happened here as in E.C. where the walls and buildings, just before their fall, seemed to say something?"

"A-ha," exclaimed the academic. "You have employed what

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is known in Oz as a silly-gism. As a matter of fact though, I think I agree with you. That tunnel whose 'rut' traces we have been following, you know? appears through my radar goggles to approach close to the surface of the ground just about here. Perhaps some emanations of whatever-it-is have got through and affected this building."

Sunnodil, the yellow fly, added his two cents' worth. He had swooped, as he delighted to do, close to the soil, even touched it, and could now report: "The ground's wettish around here, whereas the earth has been dry all the way today."

"Something under ground must have caused the dampness," averred the professor. "Maybe the river? It's only about a block away. It couldn't, in any case, as we recall, have been rain, of which we've had none."

The Wogglebug unbuttoned his tailcoat, reached into a pocket of his laboratory technician's waistcoat, and drew out a test tube. From another pocket he took a tiny brush. He proceeded to collect a bit of loose-lying soil into the tube.

The house moaned on in distress. "Please hurry and do something about me!" it pleaded. "I am in such pain."

Dorothy studied the building in an effort to see just what the source of the pain might be. "Your paint is barely chipped," she stated helpfully.

"I am in pain!" screamed the house nevertheless.

"Okay, okay," acquiesced the girl. "Professor, could you transfer your attention to... er, Mr. House?" The two erstwhile painters just hung on to the scaffold cords and gaped.

"If you don't mind," sniffed the house, "I prefer to be called 'Abode'. Reginald W. Abode, to be exact."

"Mr. Abode then," amended Dot.

The Wogglebug picked up a little forked stick that lay to hand. "Stick" to him; to the normal-size Gillikins it appeared (if it appeared at all) as the tiniest wisp of a twiglet. Holding the stick by one of its Y prongs, the savant sprinkled some grains of soil upon it and then the merest soupçon of Powder of Life which he happened to have about his person.

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Suddenly the stick shrieked, "Let go of my leg!" H.M. dropped the object like a hot potato. He wanted the stick alive for the purposes he planned for it but he was not prepared to face a crotchety personality on the part of his creation. His was not the whimsical spirit of the boy Tip when in the long-ago he had brought to life his home-constructed Jack Pumpkinhead nor yet that of the bunch at the Emerald City when they made the gump-headed flying thing. He just wanted a live tool for an experiment he contemplated making. He wasn't planning for there to be any fun involved.

Observing a respectful distance the educator now addressed the dowser-shaped stick. "Can you find us water?"

"Oh, I can do that, Prof," assured Dorothy jauntily. "About a block away. It's the Winkie River."

"No, my child," declined her friend. "It's not that kind of water we want but rather, hidden moisture down under the ground."

The stick said, "I can find ye water. Just watch out for my shakes. I get 'em when there's water underground."

"Splendid," commended the Wogglebug, then spoke aside to Dorothy: "How should we denominate our—er, friend?"

Dot thought rapidly. She remembered an old man in Kansas who had gone about looking for sources of subterranean water with a forked stick he called a "divining rod". She suggested that appellation and a 'divining rod' the instrument was thereafter termed.

However, a search for water, for whatever reason, had to be postponed. "I'm in pain!!" re-yelled the yellow house.

"Don't be so yellow!" taunted one of the flies, mistaking expression of pain for cowardice.

The injunction set off a quarrel among the flies. "You offend all creatures of a yellow hue," blamed Sunnodil, addressing the red fly. "How would you like it if I called you a communist?—just because you're red.

The flies bickered until Professor W. intervened. "Both of you, say you're sorry," he ordered his pupils. "Then *shut up!*"

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Now this episode too was side-tracked by yet a third diversion. Dorothy had rushed to seize her dog. The silly twit, despite his celebrated dog's unerring sense of scents, was about to drink from the can of yellow paint. "Toto, you mad creature! That's poison!"

It was on this occasion that the girl first took real cognizance of the container of paint. She noticed something that struck her as significant. The Gillikin house-painters hadn't been careful. Slopped paint had in places run down the sides of the can, leaving a legend that Dorothy could now read clearly as "PAIN". She was led to a wild surmise. What if—!?

Fly-sized Dot addressed the painter couple, whose names she remembered overhearing on her first arrival. "Zedria and Patricia!" she shouted, ever so loudly. The two, who remained standing on the scaffolding as if immobilized, heard nothing. Impatiently Dorothy signaled near her her carrier flies and had them portage her up to in front of the couple's faces. The painters batted at the flies ineffectually. "*Please!*" screamed Dorothy. And now behold: the Gillikins at last twigged that a teensy-tinesy human being was addressing them from in mid-air. They attended.

"The reason your house is hollering is that it's in pain!" she cried.

"Yes. So it says," agreed Patricia. "But what's to do?"

"I think it must be an enchanted paint can," explained Dot in a piercing shriek. "Somehow one of the letters has got covered up and you're literally painting your house with 'pain'. No wonder it hurts."

"So what's to do?" Zedria echoed his friend (wife? sister?).

"If what I think's the case and the contents of the can become whatever the label spells, I would suggest you clean off the 'T', then paint out two others of the letters and get 'pat'. If you paint Mr. Abode with loving 'pats' he'll be pleased and maybe stop his griping."

"What a good idea," approved Patricia. She knew from experience how nice a "pat" could be!

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Her companion (brother?, husband?), however, was contrary. "The river is so far away," he whined, tugging at his yellow hat (originally purple, of course, but sloppy Zed had yellowed it with careless handling).

"Yeah, a whole block," agreed Dorothy, "but what's that got to do with it?"

"We need water to wash the paint off the 'T'."

"Are you kidding? Acrylic enamel? Water wouldn't have much effect there."

Now the scene was broken into again. The mention of water had lit a fire under the divining rod. "Lead that to me!" he ordered; "I mean: I'll lead you to that! Somebody point me!"

The Gillikins couldn't hear the minute tones of the twiglet but all our company of travelers could. One of the flies grabbed the rod's two prongs and away they zoomed.

Not far. The rod had been carried but a few rods through the air when it was attacked by great shakes. Dorothy, aboard her bearers, twigged instantly and flew back to the male painter and exhorted him to get down off the scaffolding and fetch a spade.

When that had happened it was not long before cool clear water bubbled up from under the ground. This first success of the live divining rod sent him into a transport. "Yippee!" he yelled. "I done struck water! Yippee! The water-rush is on—I mean, is hereby declared open...!"

"Calm down," advised the Wogglebug phlegmatically. "It's only water."

At once the stick put on a mournful wooden expression. "You mean, it don't mean a thing?"

"Sure it does," reassured Dorothy. "Somebody called for water and you found it."

"Thank ye kindly, little lady," said the re-cheered stick. "I'll be glad to go with ye all your days now and find water whenever you want it."

'Hmm,' thought Dot. 'That might come in handy... some day when my adventures lead me out on those deserts around Oz.'

But for now, "To this paint job," she directed, rolling up her

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(figurative) sleeves. "You got any turpentine?"

"Yes indeed," replied Pat, who seemed to have more practical know-how than her male companion. She led tiny Dorothy to the bottle of paint thinner and herself rubbed the paint off that famous 'T'. Nor did it hurt at all that she was wearing a T-shirt.

"Okay," approved Dorothy. "Now cover up 'IN'." Soon the two house painters were back in business. They sloshed on the yellow fluid in soft wallops that seemed to affect Mr. Abode like the ministrations of a soothing masseur. He sighed with contentment as the yellowfication of the entire structure was completed. With the project done, the house said, "Oh, thank you ... all! Now I promise I'll be quite as a church mouse from now on."

Dorothy, the wiseacre, said, "Oh, I'm sorry. You can't be *quite* as a church mouse. You're the wrong shape and size. But if you'll just be quiet everyone will be perfectly content."

At that moment several mice were seen leaving the premises, carrying neatly packed suitcases, just like characters from Moominland. They'd overheard the threat about church mice and had no intention of remaining in residence in a house that bade fair to be more like a mouse than they were.

The painting and patting project successfully accomplished, there was nothing for it but that the Gillikin couple must bring out lemonade to serve to the helpful strangers. By now the newcomers realized that the purple people were not just cheap labor from over the border but actually immigrant settlers with their own home and all.

The Wogglebug summed up the travelers' situation for their hosts, stressing the urgency of their quest. (What was it now? For the moment their goal escaped him. He must ask Dorothy, privately, once they were well away.) "We'd love to stay and chat," he explained, "but we must be going. I've just run a little assay of the moist earth of the locality and ascertained that the Nomes must have dissolved a large quantity of Powder of Life in water. Just how they are transporting it remains a mystery,

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and clearly some of it has leaked out along the way — with such unlooked-for results as the vivification of your own Mr. Abode.”

This statement convinced the Gillikin pair of the gravity of the concerns of the voyagers. They did not stand in the way of their departure.



## C H A P T E R        S E V E N

Evening was coming on apace. Despite the Professor's protestations about the urgency of the quest, the travelers could do nothing in the dark. Before they were quite unable to see hands/feet before faces they managed to squeeze in only a few more adventures. They happened in this wise:

Two important changes in our heroes' mode of advance had taken place with little or no comment:

1. through legerdemain the able university scholar had changed himself, Dorothy, and Toto back to their normal sizes. He also gave the live divining rod (whom they were beginning to call, familiarly, 'Rod') a size more commensurate with their own.

2. they quit flying and *walked* on through the yellow forest. That woods, junglous in places, seemed to be of endless extent, continuing on both sides of the yellow Winkie River, which, as their last aerial venture, they crossed before their return to customary size.

By the golden evening light the leaves of the trees appeared even yellower than they did in full daylight. They were not falling, the way yellow leaves did in Kansas. Yellow was simply their natural hue all the year round. Even the tree trunks were a yellowish sort of brown (and let's face it: brown is nothing but a

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very dark yellow. That's why there's no brown in the rainbow, which consists of only pure colors with no admixture of black).

Suddenly the group came upon the very thing they least expected to see. In the middle of this north-bank part of the forest they were confronted with a stone dime store, precisely where economics would dictate that there should be *no* dime store.

Over the shop door hung a sign such as the wayfarers had come to find customary at each new venue on this quest. This one read: "NOVEL DIME STORE". The old-fashioned bay windows displayed velvet cushions, on each of which, tastefully arranged, lay a wealth of little silver discs, upon which circular legends in black lettering could quite clearly be discerned.

"Those look for all the world like dimes," informed Dorothy; then she paused to reflect on what she'd seen and said. "I guess it figures: 'novel dimes'..." As for the Wogglebug and the flies, they would scarcely have recognized the tokens for coins if they'd seen them displayed in shop windows—though yet again, H.M. Wogglebug *had* spent time in the U.S.A., the land of dimes.

The professor said, "There appears to be writing on those metal discs. Let's go inside and have a closer look."

Though the little building declared itself a "store" its interior looked very much more like a scriptorium. The room was filled with desks, ink stands, and scribes. These were Gillikins; you could tell by their purple complexions, though all were garbed in long yellow robes. "I'm confused, professor," was Dorothy's first whispered comment. "This is the second time we've come upon Gillikins in what I thought was still the Winkie country. What gives?"

But a scribe had overheard her and turned, taking the word away from the Wogglebug. The fellow stuck his stylus behind his ear and said, "Quite right, little girl. It's just as you've said. Perhaps you weren't around at the period of the expansion of the Gillikins<sup>§</sup>. A lot of us moved south of the border then and we've never gone back. They make us wear yellow here, much

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§ No, she wasn't. See *The Crown of Oz*, an adventure taking place exactly during a period when Dot was on a visit to Ev. (Editor's note)

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as it clashes with our purplitude.”

Conversation now became general, as they say in English novels. All the other scribes had dropped their work and were staring open-mouthed at the newcomers. “What work are you engaged upon with such concentration, if I may ask?” now ventured the Wogglebug, “...Mr.—er, Gillikin.”

The Winkillikin who had originally spoken explained: “‘Solitudinist’ you may say,” offered the amiable scribe; “so designated by the genial Wizard of Oz who originally set us our tasks. Don’t know why really. Perhaps because each of us works on his own; it’s not a communal endeavor.

“You see this small silver disc pinned to my board. It’s a blank dime—or ten-cent coin as known in America—”

“That’s right,” interrupted Dorothy. “I remember dimes. And of course so would the Wizard. But how funny: here in Oz where the use of money is as good as unknown...?”

“Just so,” agreed the Solitudinist. “It was when Mr. Diggs, long ago, was belatedly getting acquainted in this land he had once ruled over. This was an ordinary print shop the time the Wizard happened by. He saw books displayed in our window and came in to enquire whether we stocked the ‘dime novels’ he had been fond of in his youth in America.

“Well, of course none of us knew what ‘dimes’ were. As it happened, Diggs had a couple of them in his vest packet: sentimental tokens from the past, no doubt. He passed them around as he explained that in his homeland one could barter ‘dimes’ for novels—”

“That *was* long ago!” broke in Dot again. “Nowadays the cheapest paperback romance costs a dollar or two.”

“Er—yes. Unfortunately the Wizard’s recital got garbled as we talked the matter over after he’d gone. We wanted to please the great man and so we set about turning out novel dimes—”

“Dime novels, you mean,” instructed Dorothy.

“Well, no. That was the confusion, you see. Some of us got it through our heads that the great thing was to be able to inscribe whole book-length fictions upon silver counters such as he’d

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showed us. Now as printers and etchers—sometimes even to the court of Oz—all of us had been trained in our youth to be able to write the Lord’s Prayer on the heads of pins. So novel-transcription upon a wide area like a dime was nothing to us. We’ve been turning them out in quantity for decades now.”

This information was fascinating to the visitors, flies and others alike, and all of them buzzed about examining samples of the Solitudinists’ handiwork. The Wogglebug returned to the novel-dime he’d first spotted resting upon its velvet cushion in the display window. He stooped to take it up tenderly and read *The Talking City of Oz*<sup>s</sup>.

“Incredible!” he breathed. “The story we’re living at this moment has already been written up!”

Dorothy had caught his words. “Where?” she cried. “Oh, let me look! Well, isn’t that the smartest! Oh, I’d love to have it.” Abruptly she turned back to their informant at his work table. “How much is this—er, dime?” she demanded. ““*The Talking City of Oz*.””

“How much?”

Dorothy blushed. She’d forgotten where she was. “I mean, by the barter system. What may we give you in order to achieve ownership of this darling little—er, novel?”

The Gillikin pursed his lips as he pondered his reply. Oz-wise, the dime was any customer’s for the asking, but if now someone insisted on giving in exchange something of interest...? “That would be one novel, please. The old-fashioned sort, you know: on paper and in binding.”

This was a facer. Dot had come away on her adventures all impromptu with no luggage of any description. Her pockets contained nothing but feathers!

Oh, well, she had happened to stuff into one the magical cap that summoned winged monkeys, but that was no use to her now. She turned in distress to Professor W. “Dear Prof,” she quoth, “you wouldn’t—would you?!—happen to have any novels about your person...?”

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The savant dug into the pockets in his coattails. "I'm mightily pleased that this incident appears to have sparked your interest in literature, my dear," he said genially. "It just so happens that I have a copy about me of my own highly fictionalized autobiography, *My Life as a Scholar*—"

The announcement was greeted by the sounds of mock snoring from the group of the professor's fly pupils from the university.

The Wogglebug took umbrage. "All right, all right: so it wasn't a best-'seller'—or giver-away. That only demonstrated the poor taste of the Oz reading public, including these ingrates. Just give them a book that treats of worthwhile grown-up topics in educated language and they'll denounce it as pornography and violence. People don't actually need to *read* the books to come to such a verdict. Just let one little snot-nose would-be editor denounce it as such and the world will jump on the bandwagon with glee."

The flies whistled and emitted cat-calls of derision, But Dorothy spoke: "Thanks, professor. I'm sure the Solitudinists will like it."

"You're really going to part with this rare example of my authorship in exchange for that silly dime about, we presume, what's going to happen to us?"

"Yes."

"Comme to veux," acquiesced the learned one. "After all, it isn't as if it's the *only* copy in existence. I have boxes upon boxes of them in storage on the campus."

"You're an angel," declared the Kansas girl and ran to the lead Solitudinist's work table to plunk down the hefty autobiographical romance. He signaled to an associate who, it would seem, had no urgent task in hand and the man set to work at once to transcribe the work onto a dime. Others, having stared their fill at the strangers, had turned back to their work but were now clearing their throats and fidgeting. It appeared that all the commotion caused by such an unheard-of thing as the presence of customers upset them. They couldn't concentrate.

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Dorothy, meanwhile, brought the Oz novel dime to Highly for his inspection. That worthy took from yet another pocket a high-powered magnifying glass and trained it on the coin. He found their place in it, then rapidly skimmed some passages forward. "A-ha! It seems that in an upcoming chapter, which is all about a strange instrument called a 'flutorgan', you, my dear, save the day as usual."

But he did not venture to offer the dime and glass to his little companion. Instead he stuck the dime in his watch pocket and winked solemnly at the girl.

"Oh, but—but—tell me how I do it!" she entreated.

"I think..." The wise one paused. "—it would not be in our, or your, best interest. As you see, we have managed quite well so far in our adventure. If you were to know in advance how everything is to turn out, you'd lose—how shall I say: spontaneity."

"As you wish, Professor," acquiesced Dorothy soberly. "And—er, I think we should be moving on. The Solitudinists want, I believe, to be alone."

'That's right,' said the Wogglebug to himself. 'That's just how this chapter ends.'

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That woods *still* went on but the travelers didn't, very far, before they came to a cottage just as it began to grow seriously dark outside. A cordial glow came from the cottage windows: a yellowish green luminescence unlike the light from candles or electric bulbs.

Without ado the company intruded in the cottage, where they were confronted by a huge lightning bug. He shone greeny yellow all right. "Come in! come in!" cried the big firefly genially. "My name is Phosphorus. And yours?"

"Why, I'm Her Grace, Princess Dorothy Gale of Kansas and Oz," replied the young visitor, giving herself all her titles. "B.A.," she added. "And this is the celebrated Professor H.M. Wogglebug, T.E. —I know you've heard of him: President and Dean of Wogglebug University? Here too is a new acquaintance of ours picked up" (literally) "along the way: a divining rod just newly brought to life. We call him 'Rod'. And these are our bearers." Thus casually did Dot dispose of the derisory flies.

"Take seats, do," urged Phosphorus. Saying this, he moved to a corner of the room and seized a hanging rope, unshipped it, and lo! an enormous chandelier descended toward the floor: much slower than the one in *Phantom of the Opera*. Their host explained: "Normally my companions and I sit in these sconces

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and flash our body lights so this house shines out like a beacon. It has often been of help to wayfarers in the darkling wood. But alas: all my co-workers disappeared from here one day. I've never found out what happened to them... I'm so glad you've come."

Our friends took seats in the comfortably cushioned candleholders which were like small chairs. With Phosphorus they just occupied neatly the eight branches of the chandelier (Dorothy holding Toto in her arms). Then the lightning bug hauled away and they rose slowly toward the ceiling. "You can turn on now, if you like," suggested Phosphorus.

"Turn on'?" queried Dorothy. "Oh, I see. You think we can shine by ourselves the way you so admirably do. I'm sorry, we can't! I'm afraid we're less developed forms of life than you—who can both self-illuminate and fly..."

To hide his disappointment Phosphorus did indeed fly: down to one of the shelves that lined the cottage walls. He took up a sizable Mason jar filled with a sort of preserves which resembled nothing so much as a cross between cherry tomatoes and tiny capsicums, although shaped like inner-tubes or life preservers. This, returning to the chandelier, he opened and passed around. "Have some, do," he urged. "They're pickle O's. Tangy and nutritious. I think you'll like them."

The visitors hadn't eaten for hours and they fell upon the pickle O's ravenously. After the first surprising taste they found they quite delighted in the flavor, which was most like that of sweetish-sour lime juice with just a hint of ginger. Only the divining rod was unable to partake. He had enough of a (knot-hole) mouth to be able to talk but not to eat.

There was one result of the demi-meal which no one had counted on. When they spoke afterwards the guests' voices came out high and musical, like the notes of flutes. "What in the world!" shrilled Dorothy in falsetto. "Why are we speaking like—heavens: *piccolos!*?"

"One is what one eats," stated the Wogglebug sagely. "And you know what we've been eating."

The pun was just too awful. The group sat there in their



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candle-seats and merely gaped. Even Toto barked in a high reed-like whistling. Conversation seemed at an end.

Too late, however. The shrill flutings of the company had been heard outside the open windows by a huge bird blundering by night through the forest trees. One moment it was perched on the sill and the next—it had seized up little Dorothy in its beak and retreated again out the window.

The girl's companions were horrified, but just for an instant. No bird was going to be allowed to kidnap their doyenne without a word of explanation. Quick as thought (the Wogglebug seizing up Rod in one supernumerary hand-foot) all the winged creatures leapt from their sconces and flew off out the windows after the kidnap party. Phosphorus included. He wasn't going to let his new friends get away before they had conversed more than *that!*

Dorothy, who was always cool in an emergency, said to Toto who was still clutched closely in her arms: "I hope our piccolo voices wear off. It feels so strange screaming as a high soprano. Normally I'm alto, you know."

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Far flew they all. Enormous was the marauding bird, with strength to match: something like a landlocked Ozian albatross. Its home was among crags on a yellow mountain ridge far to the west. That, at least, was thought of by the travelers to be a slight virtue of their present plight. Farther west was nearer the approaches to the Nome King's dominions. As a matter of fact, the said domain consisted of *all* the caverns and tunnels that underlay the continent of Sempernumquam. There were certain formal (and well guarded) entrances to the subterranean realm to both east, north, and west of Oz but, so far as had been heretofore discovered, none in the magic land itself. The adventurers supposed that they were heading eventually toward a confrontation with His Awfulness, King Kaliko. As for following the course of underground 'ruts' by means of his radar scanner, Professor W. seemed to have forgotten all about it.

The kidnapper was a very musical bird, hence its attraction to the charming flute-like voices it had overheard as it flew over Winkieland. It particularly fancied piccolos, which was hardly to be expected in one so enormous, "piccolo" being the Italian for 'small'. But the avian was also fond of flutes, partial to pianos, doted on dulcimers, and liked lyres. As for accordions and mouth organs it could take them or leave them. The great

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bird's name was Phil Harmonia and he was in fact one of the great ones among the Harmonia birds who were the musical emblems of the land of Melodia, the most musical part of Oz.

In the depths of the night the group of fliers descended to Phil Harmonia's vast nest, the tiny flies, Phosphorus, and the Wogglebug doggedly following the great bird's lead. Dorothy and Toto, exhausted by their fantastic flight as well as by all the vicissitudes they had experienced that day, fell profoundly asleep the moment their heads touched the downy softness of Phil's nest. The insects made themselves comfortable too, in crannies here and there. A special fate was reserved for Rod the divining stick. Just the thing, thought the harmonia bird, for filling in and propping up that little thin spot in the nest's fabric.

Its purposes (= ?) having apparently been accomplished, the big bird flew off again into the night. It would seem that Phil and family were between hatchings; neither the female harmonia nor any young were in residence in the nest. All the travelers enjoyed sweet repose until a bright yellow dawn. Goodness knew when they would get any further rest.

Dot woke up with enjoyable stretches and yawns, then was shocked into attention. Toto was whimpering. "Why, Totokins, whatever's wrong?" wondered the dog's mistress. "Did you have bad dreams?"

For answer Toto scrambled over the uneven floor of the great nest and took a stance, whining, under one wall. High up, and after a bit of search, Dorothy could make out the figure of the divining rod, manfully propping up two sections of twigs and sticks with his forked arms. She called "Good morning!" up to Rod. He answered in kind with something of the air of a martyr.

Toto kept moaning and looking up alternately at Dorothy and at the stick figure high above. "I'm awfully afraid we can't get him down, Toto. If I were to try to clamber up that wall of sticks I'd bring the whole thing crashing down on our heads. But... I didn't know you were so attached to Rod...?"

Toto resolutely not saying anything, the girl was never to know the genesis of the great affection. She tried to cheer her

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dog and reconcile him to the inevitable. “Think of all the lovely music he’ll be able to listen to here in Melodia” — somehow she had guessed that’s where they were— “and how warm he’ll always be amongst all the feathers woven into the wall.” Dot wasn’t to know the stick was tone-deaf and insensible to temperature.

By this time Prof. Wogglebug and Phosphorus had been heard from and of course the flies were long since stirring. There were all sorts of goodies adhering to bird and animal bones littering the nest that they could snack on. “Good morning, professor,” greeted Dorothy. “How are we going to get out of *this* scrape?”

“I’ve given that thought,” replied the educator. “I think it wisest that I simply airlift you to the rim of the nest. Either that or I can miniaturize you again, so your bearer flies can carry you.” Our friends were relieved to find that a good night’s sleep had dropped their voices back to their normal register.

“Oh, please,” begged Dorothy. “Not fly-size again. It’s so indignitous. Besides I can’t do anything, teeny-weeny like that. What if I had to remove glass bells covering musical instruments, for instance? I couldn’t do it, being no bigger than a fly.”

“What a curious example,” marveled Highly. “What made you think of that?”

“I dreamt it!” said the girl, surprised herself at the unmotivated oddity of the concept. “Or no—wait! Last night... dangling from that huge bird’s claws—and just before we landed here—I caught sight of just such a sort of dome or bell-shape glowing faintly yellow in the dark. It looked like there was a spinet or set of virginals underneath it. The vision must have caught in my subconscious, and then I dreamed about it.” In fact, that was pretty good psychology on Dot’s part.

“Well then, no more but this,” quoted the Shakespeare-read Wogglebug: “I’ll carry Toto up to the top of the nest, then come back for you. I’m sure I can support you that far. Then we’ll see about trying to get down the other side.”

A bit sooner said than done. Within fifteen minutes, how-

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ever, Dorothy stood on the wide if rickety rim of the nest and looked out upon a surprising landscape. Up the slope of the Winkie mountain that supported the Harmonia bird's nest ran a yellow rock wall that ended in fact against the stone crags that provided the chief supports of the nest. Yes! to be sure: there was the glass cupola Dorothy had dreamed of. It stood on a platform built out from the wall, something like the lookout towers along the Great Wall of China, whose aspect we are familiar with from the pictures of couples getting married there.

Phosphorus and H.M. stood with her and they all marveled. "What do you suppose it's in aid of?" asked the big lightning bug.

"Well, it's musical, that's for sure," constated Dot. "See that thing underneath the dome? It looks like a large Panpipe—or a primitive pipe organ."

"More an organ, I'd say," commented the Wogglebug, "with all those labeled knobs on it and that pole that would appear to do duty as pedals."

But now the travelers were witnesses to a most curious tableau.

Up one side of the rough wall was seen clambering a mythological figure (well, he looked just like the god Pan) with a human-like upper body and a goat's nether parts. At the same time quite another sort of creature described as having huge feet and squinty eyes and dressed in a long flowing robe was climbing up the other. When in a moment their two heads breasted the wall a violent quarrel ensued.

The glass dome toward which it was obvious both figures had been making their way stood only about twenty yards distant along the wall from where our observers watched. From their vantage point they could see that the robed individual wore big spectacles down which slowly moved what appeared to be scrolls of sheet music. How, through the scrolls, he(?) could see the Pan figure was anyone's guess. But see he did and immediately began screaming:

"Don't you touch that instrument! I, its guardian, forbid you!"

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“Touch, schmutch!” Pan yelled back. “How can I touch it under its glass shell? I only came for a look-see.”

Only slightly mollified the robed one continued his scolding: “We know your kind. One look and then—one look. The next thing we know you’re trying to tip up the bell and get at the pipes.” All this while the music scrolls disconcertingly rolled up and down in the robe-wearer’s glasses.

“Our kind’!” mocked Pan. “It’s your kind who succumb to temptation and hide nice things away so nobody can get at them and do any good with them. What’s the use of Pan pipes masquerading as an organ and sealed up hermetically inside a glass dome?! Instruments are made to be played!”

“Not by wild things like you,” retorted Scroll-Specs. “We live in houses—or ‘homes’ as proper people always say nowadays—and are civilized folk. We should play upon the sacred instrument!”

“Yeah, if you weren’t tone-deaf and could read music,” was Pan’s comeback. “It’s plain to see, actually, why you keep the pipes locked up: you couldn’t play them anyway, whereas we, living at one with nature, free, untrammled, give vent to music with every breath of our bodies. *How* we’d love to get at those pipes!”

“Exactly!” shrilled Scroll-Specs. “That’s just what you’re after. But just you dare! One step across the wall and we will destroy you!”

“Ha ha,” laughed Pan merrily. “Destroy me?: an immortal. That would be pretty tall destroying.” He raised his bushy eyebrows in derision and laughed again at his antagonist.

“Don’t you laugh at me!”

“I’ll laugh at whoever I will—and especially at you, you dog in the manger.”

Here Toto growled severely, hearing his breed’s name taken in vain. Dorothy shushed him and listened on, spellbound.

“You may not cross the wall!” screeched Scroll-Specs in a fury. “Our rule number two hundred and three states clearly...”

“Your rule!” echoed Pan. “A fig for your rule!” Insolently he

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stepped out upon the rough rock surface of the wall top and pranced toward the belljar.

This was a signal for further robed 'men' to appear from Scroll-Specs' side. Each was armed with a big sixteenth-note cut out of cast iron and sharpened to a rapier-like point. Before Pan knew what he was about he was surrounded and, unarmed, had to surrender.

The robed ones next did something totally incomprehensible in the light of Scroll-Specs' earlier prohibition. They bent down in unison, wedged up the edge of the transparent bell, and thrust the Pan being inside. Our friends could see him both frowning furiously and grinning behind the glass.

But the cavalry to the rescue! Now could be heard the thunder of a thousand hoofs as multitudes of Pan's brethren rushed to his assistance. (And all the while Dorothy had thought Pan unique just one of a kind.) They carried with them a minor miracle: five hundred 'sharp' notes of cast iron that could at the same time be heard as musical notes. The metaphors had Dot's head awhirl.

But the girl was dauntless. "I have to put a stop to the slaughter!" she cried. "If they start stabbing each other with those sharp notes...!"

"No, Dorothy," protested Prof. Wogglebug feebly. To no avail. Dot had already jumped the four feet—and Toto with her—to the surface of the wall and was dashing along it. She came up under the lee of the dome and bent to try to heft it. Hopeless. One little girl had not the strength to accomplish what it had taken a dozen grown men to do only with some expenditure of effort. She stepped back aghast as the war raged unevenly along, and on both sides of, the wall beyond the dome. Robed ones and Pan creatures were sabering each other enthusiastically. The wall was growing slippery with blood. "Stop! Oh, stop!" screamed Dorothy desperately.

And lo! the fighting stopped. Oh, not because of Dorothy's pleas. No; music hath charms to soothe the savage breast. Flute-organ-like tones were thrilling up (muffled, admittedly) from

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out of in under the glass dome. Pan was “seated one day at the organ”, feary and ill at ease, and his fingers wandered wildly over the noisy keys. Then he struck one chord of music like the sound of a great amen. It quieted pain and sorrow. It was love overcoming strife! It seemed the harmonious echo from all discordant life.

At the lovely sound the yellow rock wall, with a lurch, began to disintegrate. Dot and Toto had to scamper back to the crag-based nest which was founded on firmer ground. The dislodged dome fell sideways, releasing the Pan organist, who, along with all his fellow fauns, was seen to lose his goat legs which became more man-like in appearance. At the same time the robed ones threw away their sharp weapons and yanked off the meaningless scroll spectacles. For the nonce they were all concentrating on escaping the collapsing wall; they needed unimpeded vision. Hostilities were suspended completely.

When the dust had settled and all those involved in the near-catastrophe were picking up the pieces, Dorothy presumed to clamber her way once more across the debris and asked: “Why did nobody play the flutorgan long ago? Didn’t you know that music oft hath such a charm to make bad good?”

“That’s right,” echoed Phosphorus. “You could have made light of all your difficulties if you’d just turned them into tunes.”

The formerly scroll-bespectacled ones cried in chorus: “There was a law!—going, oh, way back—against unwarranted music-making.”

Professor Wogglebug returned to this: “You folks can have the men who make laws. Give me the music-makers!”

Scroll-Specs again took up the word. “Seeing that our ancestors had decreed against music we built a wall to keep out those who would wantonly pipe an air, and on top we placed, representing the dead body of past arts, the Pan-pipes organ, well shielded from any strumming fingers. If you can’t practise an art at least you can forbid it!”

“A-ha!” cried several of the Pan people. “There you have it: ‘couldn’t’ make music. Ergo, prevent those that can. It’s the same



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impulse the whole world over.”

“We represented law and order!” insisted the robed cues, “structure and truth. The truth is—or let us say in our case ‘was’—that keeping people from doing the harmless things they want to do is the greatest fun going.”

The wild Pan flautists gave back: “We were always for freedom and beauty. If you’d only sent word that you were tone-deaf we might have enlisted magic and cured you.”

“It’s not too late!” cried little Dorothy. “Shake hands and grab guitars!”

“Yes,” followed up the Wogglebug. “Take up tambourines and trumpets!”

“Occupy yourselves with oboes,” advised Phosphorus. Even the flies got into the act, encouraging the use of ukuleles and the sounding of saxophones. Having given up war and settled for harmony, the crowds of antagonists from both sides prepared a great feast in honor of the brave girl from Kansas and her able friends. Wondrous dishes such as candied violins, sweet potatoes, bell peppers, drumsticks, and clarinet marmalade (the pipers had received the recipe for this from the Original Dixieland Jazz Band many years ago) were served forth in lavish abundance. Our friends gave a wide berth to a big tureen of pickle O’s, however.

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## C H A P T E R T E N

The adventurers, on foot, had drawn very near the outer confines of the western Winkie country when Dorothy, looking on high, took note of something most unexpected, though oddly familiar. It was a long rope dangling down out of a cloud. Now where had she seen once before just such a rope hanging tantalizingly above her? That former rope had been attached to something, and not just a cloud.

All at once what the remembered rope had depended from appeared, in very effigy, out of the dissolving cloud. It was the Wizard of Oz's balloon!

That's right, Dot recalled: O.Z. Diggs had gone off, balloon-borne, to visit the Land of Zo. This must be him on his return journey. But what was this? There were two persons in the balloon gondola. Goodness! a lady, one of about the (apparent) age of Dot's Aunt Em, it would seem. She and Diggs were staring down with all their eyes. They had expected to see Dorothy anywhere but way out here on the edge of the Deadly Desert. Nor had they anticipated seeing her green. (Curiously, the time the Wogglebug had restored the girl's normal size her natural tint had not come with it. She still looked like a bit of ould Oirland amid the expanses of Winkie yellow.)

Quickly the Wizard expelled bag air and the balloon dropped

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to the sand with a pleasant thump.

All the travelers from the sunken Emerald City crowded round as the lady in the purple dress descended from the basket. "Princess Dorothy, may I present Madam Staffia, my—er, bride."

Dorothy fainted quite away. The announcement had been too incredible. O.Z. Diggs, the world's champion bachelor, *married*?! Minds could only reel—and some, as witness Dorothy's, went into overdrive, then conked out completely.

Sooner than soon the alert Wizard dipped into his black bag and drew out smelling salts and a bottle of de-greener and applied both to his little friend. Dot sat up and looked at her rival with attention. The Kansas princess had always coquetted with the idea that *she* was the Wizard's best girl, despite the age discrepancy (Diggs was already a "little, old man" when Dot first met him at age seven). Was all the comradeship of the past century now to be at an end? Three on a honeymoon was not the accepted thing, even in Oz.

Ms. Staffia (it is not known whence came her name; perhaps some allusion to the lines and spaces on which music is written—for the lady was very musical) wore her grey hair in a large bun, one hefty enough to support the conductor's baton that was inserted through it. She had twinkling, good-natured eyes and a skin smooth and unwrinkled despite her apparent age. She extended her hand in comradely fashion to Dorothy, who dropped a polite curtsy, which made the stranger lady say, "Oh, you make me feel quite like royalty—though it's you, Oscar tells me, who have been created royal—"

"Oh, just high nobility," disclaimed the girl modestly. "I could never be queen."

When presentations had been made all round (Ms. Staffia hardly knew what to do when four flies had their names called out to her), Dorothy said to the Wizard: "I thought—that is, I was almost sure you had embarked on a voyage to Zo...?"

"Indeed I did," confirmed the jovial little man. "My dear Staffia is a Zoan. It was for her sake I made the trip."

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“Oh, aren’t you mean,” cried Dot and pouted. “I would have so *loved* to be at the wedding! What ever will Princess Ozma say when she hears you celebrated nuptials and included her out?”

“We wanted to avoid all that commotion: bringing of gifts, ordering wedding cake—you know the routine,” explained the Wizard.

“Yes, just a quiet ceremony,” added the bride.

“What made you decide to come to Oz?” asked Dorothy a bit inconsequentially.

“You mean instead of just staying on indefinitely in my home country, Zo?” asked Staffia with a little puzzled frown.

“Something like that,” agreed the girl, struggling to temper pique with indifference.

“Naturally Oscar” (his wife called him that but only because it was his name) “wanted me to see the place where he did his business—”

‘Good heavens,’ thought Dorothy. ‘The Wizard, known and loved the world over as the very epitome of Oz, thinking of the place as more or less just his office!’ Aloud she said with contrived enthusiasm, “Oh, he must have told you what a wonderful place it is. So colorful, so full of all kinds of amazing, good creatures.”

“He did mention that,” allowed the bride. “So he invited me along in the balloon for a honeymoon in Oz. Just as good as Niagara Falls, *he* claimed.”

“Oh, it is! But just think: the Wizard married. I didn’t think wizards ever married. I thought they stayed alone their whole lives, occupied with only their magic and dusty old houses.”

“No, I’ve never been interested in real estate or landlordism,” put in Oz. “I thought you knew that, Princess.”

“Well, I didn’t know what you did all the time up those seven hundred and eight steps in your tower at E.C.,” protested Dot. “You could have been lettering signs: ‘This desirable property now available’...” she trailed off, convincing no one, not even herself. She was still disconcerted at finding she’d been replaced by another in her old friend’s heart of hearts.

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The Wizard said, "Besides not being a realtor I also wasn't a wizard to start with, Dot. You know that. By nature I'm really just a humbug—but even humbugs at times feel the call to marry. It's called 'humbuggery'."

"I see," asserted Dorothy solemnly. But something else was nagging at the back of her mind. Suddenly she remembered. "Oh, Oz, did you know the Emerald City is gone? Things are terrible! The city is in grave danger—I mean, the city's in its grave. It fell into a big hole in the ground."

"That explains it!" exclaimed the Wizard with animation. "We were heading in that direction of course but though I kept a lookout with my telescope I didn't see that familiar green glint in the east. What you say could account for it."

"Oh, it does," Dot assured him. "You see, I was wishing the city could talk, then somehow, in some awful way, I got my wish. Just as your laboratory tower disappeared down the drain I heard it—I'm almost sure!—say 'Help!' I *may* have been mistaken—there was so much going on at the time—but I really think the Emerald City can talk and was asking to be rescued. That's why we set off: to try to accomplish that."

Professor W. got into the conversation. "We have reason to believe that the fell Nome King is to blame for the city's decline and fall. Something some nomes let drop just immediately prior to the earthquake gave us the hint. Our dear young friend and I, with a suitable entourage, set out at once, following, by means of my radar equipment, the trail of certain 'ruts' under ground. They led us ever westward... until we ran up against you."

"Yes," supported Dorothy. "Sometimes we traveled fly-size—but you know, flies can't get very far in a day; wing-span's not sufficient, you see. So sometimes we've hoofed it, normal size, as just now."

"Well, climb aboard!" cried Oz heartily. "What better way to travel fast and far than by hot-air balloon?! Now if we could just get the winds turned around..." As everywhere else in the northern hemisphere, the prevailing breezes in Oz are from the west. Or did you never stop to think why round-the-world balloon-

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ists always travel east?

Combining the learned Wogglebug's familiarity with meteorology with Oz's magical know-how (when he implied that he was still a non-magician he was merely being modest) the party soon had a sufficient little sub-gust blowing to whisk them out over the Deadly Desert. The Wizard tugged on a lever that made his fuel flame shoot higher and the gas in the balloon bag escalated in temperature. The balloon lifted over a hill and after that there was no looking back.

His bride kissed the Wizard for his wizardry and the savant blushed purple to match her dress. Kisses, except between good witches and little girls, were rather unheard-of in (or over) Oz and everyone felt a bit embarrassed. Gosh, it would be awful if there were to be a hint of pornography in an Oz book like descriptions of fond embraces between a married couple. But Ms. Staffia would learn proper protocol as soon as she was established in O.Z. Diggs' home.

To cover the confusion Dorothy made conversation rapidly: "What did you do in Zo, Mrs. Staffia?" she asked, trying to really care. "As for myself, I was just a common farm-hand before I came to Oz and was elevated to the peerage. Now I am a Princess's adviser," she boasted demurely and polished her nails on her lapel.

"I taught little girls—just a bit like you, Miss Dorothy—to play the piano," informed Staffia.

The Wogglebug winced. As president of a university he thought that all education should be co-educational. He waited for the new bride to confess that she'd taught boys too. She did.

"So you know music?" Dot pursued.

"Oh, natch. Why else do you think I wear a conductor's baton for a hairpin?"

"Then you'll be interested in this," ventured the girl and pulled from one of her capacious pockets a pair of the music-scroll eyeglasses she had picked up from among the debris at the collapsing Wall of Music.

"Oh, I've heard of those," cried Staffia with interest. "Actu-

ally we planned our honeymoon flight to pass over Melodia, as Oscar said it was the most musical part of Oz. He knew there'd be things there to interest me, and I'd hoped to get a look at such musical glasses." She drew them near to examine the spectacles with care.

"Well, 'musical'," wondered Dorothy. "The glasses can't actually play a tune, I don't think."

"Anyone wearing them ought to have been able to," returned the musician. "The directions are all here: 'allegro ma non troppo', 'tutti frutti can crema', 'rallentando come pazzo'. This is a cavatina in B-flat, scored for six theorbos. Quite a merry little piece: Beethoven in his lighter mood, I should hazard."

As has been noted, Dorothy could play *Jingle Bells* on the piano but was otherwise not very musical. She said, "Oh." Then she thought of something perhaps pertinent to add: "The people who wore those glasses were not very merry. Funny, really: nearly everybody we've met on this trip who has been connected with music has been rather grim. There was that awful old Metro Nome."

The remark excited the Wizard's curiosity. He asked, "What sort of individual was that?"

"The Metro Nome? He looked to be part nome, part metro," informed Dot. "He made an awful tick-tock-ing noise—not fun at all like our own dear Tickers at Ozma's court. I love *his* tick-ing but the Metro Nome's scared me silly."

"A metronome?" wondered Staffia mildly. "They're perfectly easy to control. If I were to meet yours I'd slow him down to a stop easily—that is, if his noise bothered you."

"How would you do it?" enquired the Professor, always keen to acquire new knowledge.

"That could be better shown than told," said Staffia.

"Oh, I agree. The best teaching methods are those that exemplify rather than merely describe," came back the educator.

The non-Ozian bride laughed. "An educated earwig: What won't they think of next?" It was really quite rude. Poor Professor Wogglebug grew flustered and blinked his shiny black eyes

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repeatedly.

When nobody appeared to be going to rush to his defense he stated: "I am no common bug. I had the good fortune once to be projected far above all other insects in size—and, I might add, in intelligence. During my time in the United States early in this century I took the opportunity of matriculating—somewhat under the rose—at several of the best colleges. On my return to Oz I founded the seat of higher learning that bears my name. Princess Dorothy here is one of our graduates. I think you would scarcely impugn her scholarship..."

"I'm so sorry." Ms. Staffia was properly contrite. "It's just that all this is so new to me. Monstrous—er, I mean 'magnificent'—big insects. A firefly as big as a turkey. Talking flies. Walking metronomes. A strange country. Zo seems perfectly tame in comparison. Indeed Oscar did say what a wonderful place Oz is but I tended to think he was just having me on. When he mentioned an 'emerald city' I thought for sure he was talking about Dublin in Ireland, a country known for its forty shades of green—"

The Wizard laughed. "Ireland itself, maybe. Not Dublin;" (he'd been there); "it's the greyest of the grey, and with more paper litter blowing about the streets than in any other city in Europe."

Professor Wogglebug backed him up. His knowledge was theoretical, out of books, but it was real. "Ireland has fairies and magical creatures, just as we do. But it's an island, not a landlocked, desert-surrounded country like our one and only Oz. But that Madame had not heard of Emerald City before..?! The mind boggles."

"Right now we don't even have an Emerald City," Dot reminded the others. "It's buried under rubble. It must be pounded into a million separate bits of debris. And as for the fate of Ozma and Trot and Betsy, well, I just don't like to think about it." The girl sat on a coil of rope and moped. Mrs. Diggs held her hand and tried to comfort her.

Professor Highly said, "Anyway it wasn't your fault, prin-



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cess. Your odd wish that the city walls might speak had really nothing at all to do with the final catastrophe."

"Quite so," observed O.Z. Diggs. "Because you said you wanted the town to talk didn't mean that it was going to happen."

This awful sentence was not going to be suffered to go unchidden by the language purist, Professor Wogglebug. "My good Doctor," he expostulated, giving the magician a courtesy title to sweeten the pill. "'because... didn't mean...': you call that good syntax?"

"Why—why," stammered the Wizard. "People say it all the time: 'the reason is because...', 'because is why...' It's standard modern vernacular."

"Yes, but illogical and 'wrong' by every standard of grammar. What's so difficult about saying 'The reason is *that*...'? You know, it's never wrong to be correct."

Oz felt told and ventured no riposte. Dorothy tried to cover the awkwardness by saying, "I know! The Metro Nome and the others just happened to come along at the right time with some Powder of Life."

"Powder of Life?" The Wizard was back in the fray. "Are you sure you're not dreaming, Dot? Our dear queen Ozma has a corner on all known life-powder. She keeps it in a cave right over—well, more or less in the direction we're heading. How could your Nomes have got access to any?"

"Gosh, I don't know. But when I heard the City cry out I just knew somebody had brought it to life—and how? if not with Life Powder?"

The Wizard's wife wanted to know what Powder of Life was and her husband obliged. "It's a powder first produced actually almost simultaneously by one of our Oz magicians, Doctor Pipt, and by an alternate-Oz character named Oorfene Deuce. It comes from certain plants with too much life. Their surplus goes into this powder, which is obtained by drying and pounding the leaves of the exotic. Sprinkle a soupçon of it on—oh, just anything—and the object will at once come to

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horrid unquenchable life.”

“I suppose your walking metronome had received such a treatment..?”

Staffia’s companions gaped. That was an interesting possibility that had not previously occurred to anyone. People in Oz had got careless. So many items that shouldn’t be talking and walking around *were* that people no longer paused to speculate when they met a talking teapot or perambulating perambulator. But it was a legitimate question: how *had* the off-brand nome got life? It wasn’t a real nome, a grey elf-like sprite living under ground. It was only a ‘nome’ by courtesy of its coincidental ‘species’ name, yet no one could deny certain real-nome-like qualities in it: its quarrelsomeness, its malevolence, and its long nose.

“Half nome, half music-measurer,” mused Phosphorus — and all at once a light went on in his mind. “So many half-and-half creatures. Those other nomes you spoke of, Miss D.: the pillow nomes: half nome, half pillow. The inhabitants of Jungle-Lie-Ha: half cicada, half tropical bird. Even the Melodia pipe players: half human, half goat. It’s almost like a leit(light!)-motif playing through this whole train of circumstances.”

All were struck by the lucidity of the lightning bug’s remarks. They didn’t know what use to put the suspicion to just now but many had a feeling that the dreadful King of the Nomes might have much to answer for. If he did possess, in a fashion or so, powder of life and was arbitrarily sticking a bit of this to a piece of that and bringing the whole thing to life...?

Pilot Diggs suggested that they could no do better than to persevere in their flight: to make their way to one of the known entrances to the underground Nome world and push for a showdown. With a tug on the right rope and an increment of magic-induced wind he caused the balloon to waft even a tad faster, out across the wide expanse of the death-dealing sands toward the Land of Ev.

## C H A P T E R

## E L E V E N

Truth to tell, there wasn't all that much down below to look at or to excite comment during their flight across the sands. To pass the time Dorothy, who had a well developed musical curiosity if not a faultless technique at the instrument, said to the self-confessed virtuosa, Mme. Staffia:

"Can you tell me why musically played notes sometimes sound like someone tripping up a staircase and at other times like coming down?"

"That's musical progression," spouted the adept without hesitation. "In the case of the at-first-upward-going notes sounding like they're going down, you are only hearing the original pattern of sounds in reverse. The 'run' of notes can either ascend or descend. They can't go sideways—unless one might interpret a succession of the *same* note as moving horizontally. A composer has to decide if he wants to have his notes ascend, using the same pitches that he may have used in the downward-moving run. Or vice versa." This was so profound that Dorothy was awed into silence.

Then she ventured: "It can be done in reverse...?"

"Yes. You're getting the idea," encouraged the musician.

The pleasant interlude of musicologizing was rudely broken into by a disturbance from below. The passengers looked over

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the sides and found that, all unbeknownst, they had arrived over Ev. Green expanses spread where moments before they had seen tawny sands. But there was no time to luxuriate in the sense of being once more over on survivable countryside. Gigantic creatures with human-like bodies but arrow-heads were springing upward in all-out attempts to reach and, presumably, pierce the balloon's passenger basket.

The Wizard yelled "Watch out!" —quite otiosely, as it happened.

The Arrowheads, above strong wiry bodies and powerful legs, had triangular heads of carved flint. These would be lethal if they ever made contact with anything flying overhead. As it turned out, it was not long before they did. One of the arrow-heads, whistling past the passenger gondola, struck decisively the great bulging air-bag above their heads. SSSSSSS! Boom!! Pow! The Balloon burst and everybody was pitched out in free fall.

Dorothy thought rapidly. This was the second time in as many days that she had been falling the depth of a four-storey building. This time the distance was even greater and she had, ergo, that much more time to think and plan. Again she thought of Alice and again was sure this was not going to be a slow descent. Quick action was called for. Let's see: what remedies had she about her person that would come in handy now?

Her questing hand in one of her pockets brought out a creased and wrinkled bit of fabric. Of course!: the cap that summoned the Winged Monkeys.

But rats! She, Dorothy, had already once (that is to say, thrice) made use of the cap. Admittedly it was way back in 1899 but just the same: no one person could get more than three wishes off the winged monkeys by the use of this cap:. And so? Dorothy passed the headpiece to Phosphorus, who happened to be companionably flying nearby, and herself got poised for a plunge into the Mallow Marsh which luckily lay just below. It was separated by just yards from the solid ground from which the Arrowheads had been launching themselves aloft.

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*SPLOOOSH!* and plop! plop! plop! fell Dorothy, Toto, and Mr. and Mrs. Diggs into the delicious quagmire. The winged travelers of course saved themselves. As the less phylogenically developed two- and four-footed species floundered, nearly smothered, in the sweet goo, the winged wanderers hovered in air and dithered. “How can we help you?” wailed Professor Wogglebug. “If we fly near and try to hold you up we’ll be pulled under ourselves.”

“Phosphorus!” yelled Dorothy when she could get her mouth free of marshmallow, “put that cap on your head! Now go stand on the solid ground. *No!* Somewhere *away* from the Arrowheads! Okay. Now cry ‘Epepe, pep-pe, kak-ke’ while standing on your left foot—well, one of your left feet. Got that? Next say ‘Hil-lo, hol-lo, hel-lo’ as you stand on your right feet.” The insect did as commanded. “Super!” Dot continued. “Now stand on all six feet and yell ‘Ziz-zy, zuz-zy, zik’.

Pretty soon some winged monkeys should appear and you can tell them what to do.” Her last command spoken, Dorothy sank incontinently out of sight in the gluey slough. Luckily the mallow marsh was butter-rum-flavored, one of Dot’s favorites.

While this was going on the Arrowheads danced frantically on their hillside. No more could they than our heroes’ advance undaunted into the sticky swamp. They’d brought down a whole hot-air bag full of quarry and now they couldn’t get to enjoy them—whatever it was Arrowheads did to enjoy the capture of wayfarers.

It wasn’t too long before a platoon of Winged Monkeys arrived overhead and hovered, wondering how to help. “Relax!” they called, as one might do to a drowning man. “If you don’t struggle we can pull you out and bring you to dry land—but not if you grab at and grasp us!”

When a head would appear above the soft marshmallow surface a monkey would seize a shoulder and haul away. By this procedure it wasn’t long before the four flounders were safe at last. Then Dorothy, through the medium of cap-wearer Phosphorus, ordered: “Take us to the nearest entrance to the

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Nome King's dominions!"

The four flies at once flew to the sticky surfaces of the survivors, got stuck themselves, and thus were transported paradoxically: unable to move, yet flying fast. The way was to a hole not that far away in a mountainside in Ev. Monkeys carried the Wogglebug and Phosphorus as well, just to be able to make good time.

The Arrowheads waved them goodbye, hopping up and down in furious frustration.

## C H A P T E R            T W E L V E

“There you are,” announced the head Monkey fairly superfluously, as the group landed before the rock-wall door over which was inscribed:

ABANDON EGGS, ALL YE WHO ENTER HERE.

“Thanks a lot,” said Phosphorus, taking care not to give up possession of the Cap, which still had one wish to the good on it (as Miss Dot had informed him). The monkeys raised their hats and enquired politely: “And further orders?”

Dorothy tipped Phos the wink and whispered, “Ask them to go collect the Tin Woodman. He’s half tin and half Munchkin. He might come in handy if we have to combat any more half-creature whatever-they-ares. Dot was still confused by her immersion in marshmallow, otherwise she would have realized that Nick Chopper was still *all* tin(-plated steel) and all Munchkin. He was also able to walk and chew gum at the very same time!

The travelers addressed themselves to the rather formidable-looking rock door. It didn’t seem like something that could be broached in a hand’s turn. Prof. Wogglebug, reading the superscription, said, “We haven’t any eggs to abandon. Would that we had.” In the course of his voluminous reading he had of course learned that Nomes dread eggs. (This all had something

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deeply psychological to do with elemental rock abhorring anything so life-redolent as the pregnant eggs of any species.)

Prominent on the face of the door was a knob that had something familiar about it.

"That's a nome's head!" exclaimed Mrs. Staffia.

"How can you tell that?" asked Dot pertly. "I thought you'd never been out of Zo before—and not even knowing about the Emerald City."

"It was something Oscar let fall," informed the said Oscar's wife equably.

At the same time the nome knob got into the act. "What's it to you?" it spoke rudely.

Dorothy was shocked into non-pertness by the miracle of the knob's speaking. "We'd like to go inside, please. Would you open up?"

The doorknob turned its nome-head counterclockwise as it replied: "No admittance until week after next. That is, unless you can answer me a riddle."

"Oh, goody, I love riddles," vouchsafed Dorothy, thinking her laborious adventure might finally turn out to be fun.

"Let's hope you love this one," said the knob. But the travelers' anticipation was not to be satisfied for just yet a while. At that moment the speedy Winged Monkeys came flying in past boulders, amid rock dust, to deposit a tumbled Woodman among them. Just for good measure they had brought along a Scarecrow as well.

"I insisted that I come too, dear Dorothy," said the straw celebrity. "You could use someone with a good brain."

"Oh, could we?" returned the girl naughtily. "What about the learned Professor H.M. Wogglebug, T.E., and the wise Wizard of Oz? Their brains are not so dusty... Never mind. I'm glad to see you. I suppose you were visiting Emperor Nick when the monkeys came calling..?"

The tender-hearted Woodman intervened, lest feelings be hurt. "The Chief Monkey, during our trip, informed us of what's been going on—"



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"Oh, that reminds me," interrupted Dorothy. "Phosphorus, will you be so kind as to tell 'your' monkeys you won't be needing them again just now? We'll keep the cap though. Someone else may need to use it." To the monkey leader she said, "Ta, ever so. You'll more than likely be hearing from us again. And you will be rewarded. The Emerald City is at stake, you know."

"Gracious!" cried the monkeys in chorus. "Is it going to be burned alive?" They were thinking of Joan of Arc, of course.

Dot reassured them, saying that the dear old national capital would first have to be dug out of the ground before there could be any question of burning it. The monkeys scratched their heads, a bit perplexed, and flew away.

The nome-knob cleared its throat: "Arhh-hmm...!"

"That knob is impatient," asseverated Dorothy.

Nick Chopper eyed the doorknob and said, "You were right, Do-ro-thy," taking care to pronounce the name in three syllables like Jack Haley. "During our flight the Monkeys told us how you had said you've been discovering many creatures made of halves of different species. Our knobby friend here seems to fit the pattern: half knob, half nome.

"Oh, poor knob," he went on, his soft heart suddenly finding grounds for pitying a doorknob. "Doomed to remain evermore fixed upon this inhospitable door. Though I'm not fond of nomes, my heart goes out to this one."

"The riddle!" barked the knob, quite unmoved by expressions of sympathy. "Enough of chit-chat. I must state my riddle!"

While this interlocutory went on, the 'lesser' animals, dog and flies alike, bored, had been sniffing and buzzing around the cracks that outlined the rock door. Toto barked helpfully and one of the flies laid a few eggs, just to pass the time. So much for the door's announced prohibition.

"Silence!" demanded the nome-knob. "Get these creatures away from me so I can concentrate properly and pronounce the riddle."

Dorothy took up her dog and Professor Wogglebug requested that the varsity flies come and buzz attendance on him. "That's

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better," the knob finally said something gracious. "Now for the riddle:

"What quenches thirst  
But makes one thirst  
For something more,  
Yet know not what:  
A something clear  
But causing cloudiness?"

"Oh, that's dead easy," dismissed Dorothy. "Ask me another!"

The others, however, remained deep in ponderation. The Scarecrow was embarrassed that he couldn't answer right off the bat. He thought and thought. It had to be, he reasoned, something frightfully abstract. "The hardest, most obscure, concept the Nomes could think of in phrasing a riddle must surely be something they themselves hardly know: something they're not used to; something foreign."

"Right-o!" crowed Dot. "I know the answer to your riddle too, Scar'ks."

"What is it?" all present demanded to know.

"The water in the Forbidden Fountain of Oz—in the Emerald City, you know."

"Blast!" cursed the nome knob, thereby admitting the rightness of Miss D's reply. But nothing for it now. Without the knob's own volition the great rock door creaked aside, showing the half-lit passageway within the mountain. The querulous knob's nome face was now hidden in the shadows.

"I wonder," mused the Wogglebug as the party entered the rock hall and began to make its way forward, "how Nomes even know about the waters of forgetfulness. After all, they had all experienced it and hence had no memory of it! An enigma."

"Oh, Kaliko—him that's king now—didn't drink the waters," reminded Dot. "He stayed at home guarding the crown jewels the time the others all stormed off to conquer Oz. Kaliko's no dummy."

He must have read up the event in Oz history books. A peek at *The Emerald City of Oz* would have told him the whole story—

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with no danger of his own going Alzheimer's."

The bunch had a long hike before them and they passed the time in vain speculations about just what was going on in the minds and the dominions of the Nomes. "You said," suggested Professor Wogglebug, "that King Kaliko is no dummy, yet now it looks as if he too is trying to carry out a take-over bid as regards the Oz capital. How come, I wonder. He knows that never works."

"I wouldn't be surprised if it had something to do with things that Oz is rich in but which Nomeland has little of. Most of all: learning," declared Dorothy, making a statement sure to appeal to the scholarly insect. "If he grabbed the Emerald City and were successful somehow in transporting it whole back down into his underground realm, and then *if* he managed to get hold of a supply of Powder of Life and inoculated our whole dear capital with it, why, Nomeland would have a collection of libraries and museums and storehouses of art all neat and complete for Kaliko and his academicians to have recourse to whenever they liked.

"The town's talkativeness would be their card catalogue. If, for instance, a scholar wanted to know who was vice-president during the term of President Polk, all he'd have to do would be to ask the city where that nugget of information was to be found, then go right to the source."

"It sounds convincing, Dorothy," put in the Wizard. "But as for miniaturizing the city, presumably so it could be picked up conveniently in one piece, that doesn't seem to have happened. The city just collapsed and was buried, as you recounted. What good was that to Kaliko?"

Dorothy was just about to apply her intellect to the problem when a horrid sound struck all ears. They rounded a turn in the rock passage and there, blocking the way, stood the dreaded Metro Nome.

"Well-tic-aren't-tok-you-tic-the-tok-clever-tic-ones-tok!" clacked the rhythmic voice. The adventurers stopped dead. Nick Chopper was the only one armed and he hefted his axe with intent to harm a living creature. Fortunately he was thwarted in

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this self-heart-breaking maneuver by the equally brave Scarecrow who volunteered to get in front of the others and shield them with his feelingless straw/cloth body. But a third champion ran forward.

It was Madame Staffia! She darted toward the threatening Metro Nome, remarking as she passed: "Remember what I told you, Dorothy."

All watched, perturbed, as the intrepid woman snatched from her bun the whip-like conducting baton. Her grey locks fell down and she looked much like an excited witch as she rushed into combat.

The proud husband looked on, saying, "She has gumption, an excellent thing in woman."

"Where—" began the Woodman, thinking gumption was an attribute of gumps and not seeing any about the brave lady's person. However, he thought better of it and resolved to look up the word in his dictionary when fortune would give him leisure for such rites of scholarship.

Bold Mistress Staffia was nothing daunted by the fact that Metro Nome was unarmed. Courageously she thrust, crying "Touché!" as her baton tip struck and activated a latch on the Nome's wooden casing. It was his speedometer. Deftly the woman flicked the lever down to zero.

"Help!-tok. What-tic...are...tok...you... tic... doing... t-o-k..." the Metro Nome ran down. It was all over. Having no arms to re-set his mechanism, the surly instrument was helpless. Feet had it neither, hence it could not pursue the wayfarers who ran past, laughing. The metronome had only ever been able to move by lurching its bottom-heavy shape along. The Metro Nome had proven to be a paper tiger.

"Funny thing," panted Dorothy as she rushed along as one of the crowd. "How come the Metro Nome got here as fast as we did, we with wings to fly and it with no extremities at all...?"

That unlikelihood, however, as with many another, was swept into oblivion by the next obstacle that loomed up. The winding rock passage abruptly opened out into the vastest

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cavern hall anyone had ever seen. It was at least as big as the main auditorium of Radio City Music Hall (minus the Rockettes). “Whew!” cried everybody and stopped short.

Immediately in front of them reared up an incredible machine with drill-designed pistons that whirled furiously, with tubes that sucked and valves that spewed, and all of it built of hammered brass.

“It looks like somebody’s home-brew still, doesn’t it?” remarked the Wizard. Diggs could well remember long ago and far away when such things operated down on the farm and out in the woods. Nobody else, however, knew what he was talking about. They just gaped while pistons pounded and tubing squirted a floury-looking fluid out into a vast tub-like tank that filled the cavern. It was the size of the Emerald City!—and that was going some, because the capital of Oz was at least a mile square, whereas the dear old Music Hall had never come hear any such proportions. The comparison could be made, though, and the comparer not deemed dotty, because of the fact that the very Emerald City itself also filled the vast cavern space. It and the cauldron tank were kind of co-extensive.

Our friends’ earlier concern about the fate and form of their beloved city was now resolved. It would seem that when the city sank into the great opening in the ground it had not been tumbled and crushed but had shrunk as a cohesive unit down to about the size of a city block, in which state it could apparently be transported (faster than our aeronauts could fly) half across Oz and *all* the way under the Deadly Desert in order now to fill up a Nome cave and sit quietly conversing (yes! sure enough: it could talk!) with King Kaliko himself, whose stone throne took up the only remaining space in the already twice-filled cavern.

“Hello, citizens!” cheerfully greeted the City (now ealled “Emmy” for short). The very Nome King himself deigned to take notice of the group’s arrival and said graciously, “Oh, so good of you to join us. Let me see: what uses would you like to be put to? Oh, I know: I’ll have that dog turned into a muff, for

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chilly days when a little something extra about the hands would feel comfy. I'll arrange for it still to be able to bark in warning when and if intruders appear—such as yourselves.

“As for the young girl, hmm. I believe I'll give her dish-pan hands so she can do duty as a scullery maid and wash up after my meals. And isn't that the renowned Wizard of Oz I see before me? I believe I'll have you combined with a copy of the expanded version of *The Deconstructionists' Bible*, so you'll be ready automatically to go into action whenever I want anything destroyed. You might begin by unbuilding your laboratory tower at the Palace of Magic. It's right over there—” Kaliko pointed at the grinning Emerald City. “So get busy!”

“No, don't, Oz,” spoke Dorothy quietly and authoritatively.

Emmy turned its great stone face toward the imp(r)udent girl. From being the shining capital of a fabled fairyland it had now become just a small town, with small-town ways. For eyes (it had lots more than the standard two) it used the upper windows of some of the taller buildings in town. It spoke through several mouths, though never more than one at a time; these were the city gates at which in the dear long-ago the Guardians had passed out green spectacles. What gerved it for ears was anybody's guess.

“Take seats, folks,” invited the City in its first extended speech to its newly restored inhabitants. ‘King Kaliko here's got me tellin' him stories out of my fabled past. I think he likes best the one where his predecessor, ol' King Ruggedo, ran off with me on top of his head.<sup>§</sup> Say, that was a time and a half! Laugh?! I thought my drains would never dry!

“But we have serious talks too. He's tryin' to find out all the weaknesses of everybody in town so he can play on 'em to destroy 'em all. It's a real important mission.”

“Hmf,” said Dot, unmoved. “He'll have trouble doing that. He knows nobody in Oz can be killed—”

“I never said ‘killed’,” returned the City. “‘Destroyed’. You can do that quick enough. Remember the time, Scarecrow?, when

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§ See *Kabumpo in Oz*. (Editor's note)

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Princess Ozma sent you an' ol' Sir Hokus of Pokes into that little room in the Palace to destroy ol' Witch Mombi?<sup>s</sup> And King Kaliko has worked out the neatest system for disposing of undesirables. He'll just have me sit on 'em. They end up flat as playing cards—and not much use to themselves or anybody else after that."

This revelation of Nome tactics really did stir the young Princess where she lived. She ran to the Nome King and pulled his beard (a new tonsorial decoration since the sixties). "Shame on you!" she cried, "for being such a meanie!"

"That was not wise, princess," spoke Kaliko gravely, his eyes watering from the tweak. "Ku-Klip!"—at the summons a venerable Munchkin familiar to many of those present stepped forward—"take this girl to your workshop and chop off her hands, then throw her into the combine: the part that provides dishpan attachments."

Ku-Klip smiled sickly. Time was when all these newcomers—well, most of them—had been good acquaintances of his. It was against his will that he had come into employment at the court of the Nome King but, after all, the position did promise career advancement.

Tinsmith Ku-Klip's handiwork, the Emperor of the Winkies, said in a sad voice, "I never would have thought it: that you, my onlie begettor, would take up a life of crime. All those years when I fondly but foolishly believed that you were inspired only by altruism in making over mortals in tin-plate. Now it seems I must face the fact that you were moved only by a wish to manipulate lives. You're a control freak!"

"Oh, but, Nick," protested Ku-Klip, "think of it: once King Kaliko has taken over all of Oz—not merely the odd city here and there—he's going to let me turn everybody and everything I want into tin. Imagine it: all Oz as one shining silver-hued land! No more commonplace trees or animals or farmland crops cluttering up the view."

"You don't know what you're saying, honored Ku-Klip," mourned the Woodman. "You used to enjoy all those things—

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§ See *The Lost King of Oz*. (Editor's note)

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at least, I assumed..."

"Not any more," affirmed the tinsmith stoutly. He appeared perfectly cold and collected about the enormities he was proposing.

Now Mme. Staffia surprised everyone by stepping forward and seizing the smith's wrist. She felt for a pulse. "None," she announced.

They all gasped. The tinsmith, unlike his star production Nick Chopper, had no heart! Or if he had one, it was of stone or flinty anthracite.

O.Z. Diggs taxed the Nome King with it.

"Sure," smirked that monarch. "My nome surgeons removed his flesh heart and inserted one of coal. It's just as black and feelingless as—well, coal."

"I'll give him one!" at once declared the selfless tin man. "It's only plush but it's soft and yielding—and red besides. It'll serve him much better than a cold coal heart."

"No," forbade the Wizard. "That heart was made for you. If you donate it to another there's no telling what might happen. Why, you might both wind up with no functioning heart."

Meanwhile, however, Ku-Klip was duly dragging the terrified Dorothy off to the combine to be remade as a scullion. The Tin Woodman didn't hesitate a moment. He raised his mighty axe and brought it down with crushing tearing violence upon the back of his former mentor. A great gap was torn in clothes and flesh, while blood squirted everywhere. By no means daunted Nick thrust his tin-plate hand into the hole, felt around, and yanked out a horrid pulsing thing of slippery black and hurled it into a far corner. Next he calmly unfastened the silver plate upon his own breast, took out the plush heart, and stuffed it into the wound in the back of his former friend. Afterwards he fell back gasping and sobbing, overcome with anguish at what he had done.

Lo! a great change had come over the tinsmith. While Nick stood weeping and rusting, Ku-Klip first looked down at his chest, felt of the place over his heart gingerly, and then smiled.



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He let go of Dorothy in a gentle manner and retreated quietly to the distance from which he had first appeared.

As no one could be killed in Oz (and he was far from being 'destroyed'), the tinsmith would apparently live on, although he would no doubt fare much better if he had a live flesh heart inserted. The Wizard of Oz made a mental note to have that detail attended to when leisure would allow.

The Scarecrow, meanwhile, had seized Nick's oilcan hat off his head and was pumping for dear life, relubricating the tin one's face and neck joints against dangerous rust. Funny, really, that the "Tin" woodman rusted so easily; tin, by definition, is a rustproof metal which is used to cover steelplate just to *keep* it from rusting. But then in Oz things seldom go as one expects.

By now King Kaliko was getting upset at the way things were proceeding. He left his throne and advanced to the newly released Dorothy, seized her, and was, in very person, going to conduct her to the Combine for getting made over in a more useful form, when Emmy opened its gate mouth to fullest extent, thus allowing a fly-size Queen Ozma to emerge.

The dainty fairy princess had been preparing egg flips for some of her retinue within city and palace when she heard familiar and beloved voices outside the City-walls. She still had an egg in her hand and quick as thought she now pitched it at the Nome King. Of course, being the (relative) size of a fly's egg, it made no impression on the Nome ruler.

"Quick, Professor!" called Dorothy, whose young eyesight was better than that of some in being able to recognize the diminutive figure in its flowing robes as her very own sovereign. "Out with your portable size-widener! Train it on our dear Queen!"

Professor Wogglebug did as requested and soon the lovely Girl Ruler was able to address her subjects on an equal-size footing. She stared wide-eyed at the upstart King of the Nomes. "I've got to get Glinda," she announced firmly, in this case referring to the great and good red Sorceress of the South who was always being called on to pull people's chestnuts out of the fire.

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Before she could make a move, however, Kaliko with his free hand seized dainty Ozma's arm and hauled away on both girls at once. Two scullions were always better than one. Away to the Combine with them both!

Dorothy continued to yell for help, and her friends began to get ready to dash to the assistance of the two hapless captives. The famous four flies were first off the mark. They flew to the Nome King's pupils to try to block his vision so that he would be unable to see what he was about. This was a signal for royal Kaliko's retainers to fly at Professor Wogglebug's pupils and take swipes at them with their fly-swatters. The upshot was a general free-for-all. The Wogglebug attempted to aim his size-altering machine on the Nome King but the projector merely got smashed in the struggle. 'Good thing I'd already transfigured our dear Queen back to normal,' he complimented himself.

The Scarecrow's military record in this engagement was later to read as follows: Attempted to get between King Kaliko's legs and trip him up but other nomes jumped on him and stomped the chaff out of him. His straw stuffing flew every which way. 'I goofed,' the bold warrior confessed to himself. 'I should have thought of something better than that.' However, it was always to remain a source of pride to him that he had been mentioned in dispatches.

Toto too was dogfully saving the day. He rushed to bite Kaliko's ankle but was kicked away cruelly. Funnily enough, the Wizard of Oz and his bride didn't do much of anything except stand around and watch. Well, it *was* sort of a fun scene, with lots of action.

The Wogglebug and Phosphorus the lightning bug were conferring entomologically off to one side. Hence, it seemed left to the still weeping Tin Woodman to do something effective. Noting that nothing seemed to be of any avail in assisting the two defenseless young ladies on their reluctant journey to the dread "Combine" with all its brass whirligigs and spinners, Nick knocked his knuckles on his chest and decided in his heart of

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hearts to help them.

First he made a speech. “Er-hem,” he began demurely. “Princess Dorothy, you saved me in the woods. Oh, you remember!: all that time ago. Gee, it’s just a century ago, this very year. How time flies. Anyway, without the help of a child from out in the great world, I never...” All this time he was stealthily edging toward the (as it was officially named) Two-Things-Into-One Conversion Machine (known familiarly, as we have seen, as ‘The Combine’).

But another proved in the end to be the prime mover. This was the dear old Emerald City itself. Ponderous as it was it still managed to drag itself with a ferocious scraping of foundations across the floor of the cavern. You’d think King Kaliko would have heard it coming but he was so engrossed in being cruel to Ozma and Dot that he was caught off guard. Emmy, employing one of its towers as a far-reaching arm, knocked the nome king into the vast vat appertaining to the Combine, where he struggled wrathfully in the turbid floods of whatever that awful mixture was that filled the copper (I mean, brass). Gee, there must have been gallons and gallons of it!

Not too late the agile tin man sprang to switch on the machine. Quietly the on-looking Wizard chanted the ritual words (all magic formulae were known to him). What our friends failed to take fully into account was the fact that the floundering Nome still had hold of Dorothy and Ozma, one in each fist. The girls were going to get turned into bipartite creatures as well! unless somebody did something effectual in a pretty big hurry.

But what could one do? Nobody thought to switch the on-off lever back again. Admittedly the Wizard stopped reciting the promulgating spell. But it wasn’t enough. Inexorably, with the Combine at its present setting, Ozma was going to end up half fairy, half casserole, while, as we know, Dorothy had been promised dish-pan hands—and might end up pot-bellied, to boot. Wouldn’t she look a sight!

The Tin Woodman was ever audacious, not to mention altruistic. He stated, “Nothing like this is ever going to happen

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again," but whether with anticipation or nostalgia is not known. So saying, and quite despite the murmured *No's* of his friends, noble Nick thrust himself well within the meshing gears of the terrible machine. A piercing shriek of grinding metal was heard, like that of a thousand dinner forks locked in mortal combat. But the move was effective. The great Combine ground to a halt. No more (until it was repaired) would the device turn living creatures into half of one thing and half of another.

With a final crunch the Combine spit out the mangled Woodman. His waist was twisted and crushed flat and both his legs were folded double, the opposite way from how his knee joints worked.

As we have heard, the machine had been adjusted to turn people into half pans and pots. Now it was ascertained that the Nome King himself had been immersed sufficiently long in the magic brew to turn him into half a pot and half a nome. And what do you get if you mix "pot" and "nome"? A 'pome', of course. Kaliko was now the Pome King.

Other than that he seemed not to have altered greatly in outward appearance. True his head now resembled a saucepan, with its handle for his nose, but otherwise the adventurers had no trouble in recognizing him as the tiresome monarch of old.

As "Pome King" he soon made the discovery that his pot head was full of 'pomes'. Such resembled in some particulars poems, the difference being that pomes didn't rhyme or have rhythm or make any sense. Pomes at once swept the Nome nation as being the 'in' form of verse. It was easy and fun. Just write down, in short lines, whatever popped into your head and you had a pome. Don't wait around for 'inspiration' or the feeling that you have something worthwhile to say; you may lose valuable time that way.

As time went on it was found that King Kaliko was most gifted at long narrative pomes, based for the most part on traditional tales of the adventures of Oz people. This was perhaps odd, inasmuch as Nomes had never been Ozites and the Nome kingdom mostly underlay the land of Ev. However, the wishes

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of the public had to be considered and those who patronized the ruler-turned-romancer were mostly Oz citizens.

In time to come persons who wanted to listen to the tales of two cities (E.C. and Kaliko's own underground town) had a choice of narrators. They could tune in the Pome King or the talking capital itself. The Nomes deciding they couldn't have a pot-head for potentate, poor Kaliko refugeeed to Oz and took up his residence in a garret in a disused hay barn near a sally port on the south side of the Royal City of Oz. There those hankering after stories of derring-do in days of yore gathered about the feet of the made-over king, who now took delight in the arts of the raconteur. If he still nurtured any hopes of conquering Oz it was going to have to be a conquest of spirit, gathering plaudits as High King of Pomes.

When informed of the flitting-in of the new and extinguished foreigner, the Emerald City made an announcement: "The Pome King and ourselves will vie to see which can provide the richest narrative fare for the story-hungry."

Just out of interest Queen Ozma asked Kaliko which legend from the heroic past he was going to make his first magnum opus of the story-teller's craft. The humbled ex-royal look perplexed for just a bit, then turned to Princess Dorothy for suggestions.

The Kansas girl, never loath to take the limelight, replied gaily, "Help is on the way! As a matter of fact *this* adventure has already been written up; indeed, it's even been engraved..." Here she signaled meaningfully to the Wogglebug who, catching on quick, extracted from his watch pocket the novel dime, *The Talking City of Oz*.

"Here you are, your majesty," he said. (If Kaliko was no longer Nome King he was in the act of launching on a career as Pome King, so the title was not being taken in vain.) "If the inspirational juices don't immediately flow, just read off this. I believe Mr. O.Z. Diggs, gifted Wizard of Oz, can provide you with the high-powered magnifying lenses necessary for deciphering the text."

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But that was all for later, when the dust had settled and future plans were being made. For now the travelers were still in the mighty cavern, scene of the violent denouement that had at last righted wrongs. They were packing up their gear for the long weary journey back home.

The mangled Woodman was lovingly swathed in the regathered straw of his lifelong friend and companion, the Scarecrow, whose bran-filled head and garment body were also stowed in the packing case for further padding. Then they planned to set out to walk the whole long way through the nomes' system of underground passages (complete with ruts) back under the great desert and on to the Emerald Hole of Oz.

There was just one problem. That talky town had to be transported back to where it belonged to be! What was to be done? Neither Fairy Ozma nor Wizard Diggs had sufficient magic on them to negotiate the carriage of cities about the planet.

But with what they had there was after all one thing they could do. Clever Princess Dorothy thought of it. She spoke to the accomplished Prof. H.M. Wogglebug. "Oh, Highly," she cooed coaxingly. "Would you train your smallifying device on the city? If it were bite-size I could carry it in my pocket."

Here the sprightly girl threw on the ground all the feathers and the music-scroll glasses—and with them so many memories—and she handed to royal Ozma the Magic Cap. Now she had plenty of pocket room.

The Wogglebug had no objection to the plan and before you knew it the talking city of Oz was about as big as a deck of cards. It kept on talking, of course but now its voice was so tiny that everyone could comfortably ignore it.

With all preparations made, and the packing case jouncing along on a cart provided by Nomes grateful to see the last of their visitors, the return journey began.

"Ozma," said Dot as they walked along companionably, arm in arm, "wasn't this the greatest adventure of them all?!"

"I'm not sure, my dear," replied the pensive little Princess. "I'm afraid I came out of it with a bit of egg on my face. Why, I

## THE TALKING CITY OF OZ

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didn't do a thing...!"

"I did," boasted the other princess, the one from Kansas. "I opened my big mouth and wished the Emerald City could talk. Remind me, will ya?, not to do *that* again..."

