

THE
TEN WOODMEN

OF

OZ

The Oz Book for 1999

**Founded On and Continuing
the Oz Stories by**

March Laumer

This book is for me Mum:
still the one I love the most
and in memory of my dear Dad

THE TEN
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C H A P T E R O N E

The Tin Woodman spent the day in bed.

It was too bad, really. After all, it was meant to be a day of glamor, even glory! The hundredth anniversary of his ascent to the Imperial Throne! Actually, the throne was just a kitchen chair, painted egg-yolk yellow—for the tireless woodman had never needed to sit down; if anyone wanted an audience they could just walk up and talk to him.)

Yes, it was a hundred years since the grateful Winkies had elected him to rule over them and he'd been doing it ever since. Conditions in most parts of Oz had begun to stabilize from that time, about a century before, and since then almost everywhere it had been decided peaceably who ruled who. Oh, there had been one attempt to depose Nick Chopper as Emperor but it had all come right in the end, and now he stood in the nimbus of legend and pageantry as Oz's longest-crowned crowned head. Even Princess Ozma was an upstart by comparison. Her reign had only begun four years after Nick was comfortably installed in his tin palace at the fair tin and yellow town of Winkiezia.

'Lay in the nimbus', rather. It *was* tiresome. He'd been hoping and planning to be still more or less ambulatory for the occasion as late as six weeks ago when he himself had attended the gala celebrations in honor of the centenary of the famous

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Scarecrow's descent from his pole (or family tree^s) in the Munchkin farmer's corn-field.

That had been an occasion. Everyone in Oz of any importance had attended, and since the event coincided with the straw man's second inauguration as president of the Munchkins the majesty of the situation can well be imagined. Princess Dorothy, obviously, and her young husband were there, she as virtual co-star of the production. The Courageous Lion had come (leaving his numerous family at home). Queen Ozma and the Wizard, together as always, had attended. Queen Glinda too; yes, the wise witch of the South had been apotheosized at last—and of course that made Sples Smith prince-consort (as "Earl Saladin"). The Fruakxes were there. The Mankato-Gales. The Delphias. Trot and Betsy and *their* husbands. Oh, the list of celebrities who had gathered was virtually endless. Everyone agreed there had never been so many of the famous assembled all at once before, even at Ozma's Palace of Magic. And when the Emperor of the Winkies was wheeled in the applause and excitement had reached the apogee.

Everyone was sorry he had to be wheeled. Now, after all, chairs were being found to be useful to him. Maybe he'd better get him a wheelthrone after all, thought the tin man wryly. In the past year those who lived near him daily had got used to the sight of the seated monarch. The poor Woodman had got *so* frail that he had to conserve, not his strength, but his substance, where he could.

When Dorothy had pushed his chair to within five yards of the dais where Pres. Scarecrow was standing, taking the congratulations of the multitude, Nick gripped the handholds and thrust himself to his feet. Creakingly he stalked to the blue-suited straw man and they fell into each other's arms. Nick made no effort now to control his tears. Where was the sense of worrying about rusted jaws when your hips were so far corroded that your legs threatened to break off at any moment?

Now for the first time in a century it was the obligation of

§ See *The Royal Book of Oz*. Editor's Note.

the *Scarecrow* to support his tin friend. He could do that because latterly, accepting a useful piece of outer-world technology, he had had a rudimentary plastic skeleton inserted inside his clothes and straw. The straw man knew for the first time—and delighted in!—some of the resiliency and freedom of action of other creatures. He could pick up something! heavier than a flower head or a butterfly.

(It is true that in the first chronicle of Oz the Scarecrow is represented by both historian and illustrator as having helped equally, with Nick Chopper, to pick up and carry both Dorothy and her dog, but we must assume that that was a mere courtesy and cordial deception by the two creators and that it was the man of metal alone who bore ninety percent of the weight. A mere flimsy figure of straw, whom the little girl herself had been able to lift down from his pole with no exertion, could never have been able, in turn, to pick *her* up.)

Now the fragile Woodman could lean on his friend and cry and that friend could, with just a *little* effort, bear the weight—for just a moment. Then the tin man fell back into his chair and dried his tears—and nobody knew really if he was crying because of sentimental nostalgia or at the grief of the falling away of all things. Still, before they left that evening to carry him back to his capital, he assured the Scarecrow that he was looking forward to receiving him in somewhat more than a month's time at the tin castle—what there was left of it. "My physicians—my mechanics, I should say," he related, "are going to try a new treatment on me. They can't restore the wasted tissue, of course, but they think they have a process for applying a kind of diamond paste and baking it onto me, that will, as it were, substitute for what's eaten away and perhaps be even stronger."

Alas: the process produced, indeed, a diamond-hard shell that was resistant to everything; it just wouldn't *adhere* to anything but itself. In the grueling process of its application the decayed substance of the Tin Woodman's hips broke utterly and he was rendered legless.

Now a vital question for the first time had to be faced

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earnestly that had somehow never arisen before in the magic land. It was: how much of a magically living being could you replace without the being's losing its magic life and becoming just a pile of junk?

The problem had come *near* being posed, at times, in the case of the genial Scarecrow. His flimsy construction made it imperative now and then for substitutions to be made. Naturally these were piecemeal; if they pulled out his straw to renew it with fresh, the life of the man remained in his head and clothes until they could get him back together again, stuffed. If a boot grew just too worn-out or the jacket too awfully tatty for a president to be seen in, it could very simply be replaced by another. There was even a traumatic occasion or two when his brilliant brain had been taken out to be sifted and aired—and the head was still alive when the seat of his intellect was restored to it. Yet you couldn't throw away the sum total of the Scarecrow and expect that an all-at-once brand new one in his place was going to live or be the beloved personality of old. There clearly had to be a continuity. But what was the hairline that made the division between viable continuity and non-continuity?

In the present case *all* of the poor Tin Woodman was at risk. All of him would have to be replaced if he were to walk again as the gleaming silvery figure so long familiar. The tin man went along with the idea that you could attach fresh arms and legs that would be as good as the old but he refused to credit that he could ever feel at home in a wholly new head—and as for a replacement heart in a substitute body? He flatly declined to consider it.

So he lay in bed now, though with no need to say, "Where's the rest of me?" He could see the rest of him, neatly folded and laid on a chair by the wall, so that he could look that way now and then and reassure himself that he still had his legs; owned them, if not in actual bodily possession of them, as it were. Only when visitors came to see him was a large yellow silk kerchief laid decently over the legs that callers might not see the dread ravages of his disease.

“Tin,” Dr. Dorothy Choggolak (as she now was) had said. They had been sitting side by side in Nick’s tin lizzie as Zip made the yellow, bullet version of a scalawagon flash through the burnt-orange late-summer twilight. “I read up on it a bit. The most noteworthy characteristic of the metal tin is that it is non-corroding. So I just don’t understand how this could have happened to you, Nick dear.”

Nick’s jaws creaked as he tried to grin. “And yet your own very first impression of my tin and me was of rust, dear Dorothy,” said he.

“Yes,” the young woman agreed. “I didn’t know enough at the time to be surprised. Now I do... *aren’t* you made of tin?”

“Good gracious, no.” The Woodman’s merriment was hearty despite the parlous state of his health and the physical difficulty of talking through a corroded throat. “‘Tin’ is just an expression—in such phrases as ‘tin can’, ‘tin hat’, ‘tin whistle’. What is meant is ‘tin alloy’ or ‘tin plating’. Pure tin is impractical. Think of tin foil! If I were made of that...!?”

“Oh, but that’s so thin. If it was just thicker, as thick as your... skin is...”

“I still couldn’t stand up. My own weight would make me crumple and collapse—to the accompaniment of the ‘cry of tin’.”

“‘Cry’?”

“That characteristic creaking, crackling, rattling noise that comes from tin when it is bent. The fact that I used to rust proves I’m made of plated *steel*—with, incidentally, a good deal of zinc in the composition.”

“And yet you haven’t *rusted* exactly now.” Dorothy was still puzzled.

“Oh, no, after I got myself nickel-plated that problem wasn’t any longer so troublesome. I’ve always been extra careful to keep dry. Only dampness, not to mention outright moisture, causes the oxidation that produces rust.”

“Then how...?”

Yes, that’s what Nick Chopper thought about all the time now. The how.

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He was thinking of it when the first callers were announced of the many who would come today. This was of course a deputation of the palace staff, led by his adjutant Ojo the Lucky and the cook Lewdoed. They all came wearing artificially merry faces, faces that lost their smiles when they caught sight of the hastily draped legs on the chair. They just couldn't get used to the idea of a bed-ridden ruler. They babbled their congratulations and deposited their bouquets and backed out of the room, just feeling so bad.

And so the long day began.

C H A P T E R T W O

The Careleaver Kids were furious.

Of course their fury had been cooking up slowly over quite a number of years, starting first with mystification, then going on to disappointment, and then to frustration and renewed efforts and crashing failure and now, genuinely, outright rage.

"So, all right, what do we do about it?" asked Molly Coddle in high dudgeon.

"We've tried everything we can do on our own," reminded Sam Aritan.

"Yeah, and none of it worked," sniffed Mel Iffluos.

"No," agreed his constant companion Sarah Nade .

The rest of the crowd nodded their heads vigorously, though not so much as to knock off any petals. Everybody was in agreement but nobody came up with any saving suggestion until little Sue Veneer piped up in her tiny voice: "We could ask Glinda..."

Well, the obviousness of that struck everyone at once and Artie Fishel said with a humph, "We should have thought of that years ago."

"I did," said Ella Fant. "I thought of it and then I thought, 'So we set out to consult the good witch. It'll take years. By the time our Virginia creepers get through crawling to see her, the situation will already have solved itself, somehow—or they'll

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have died on the way.”

“‘Died’!?” echoed Mary Neight, shocked. “You forget where you are, dear. Nothing ever dies in Oz.”

“Well, you know what I mean; our process of withering and renewal. Let’s face it; even in Oz the same tulip blossom doesn’t stand there decade after decade.”

“Never mind that,” broke in Lou Gubrius impatiently. “Obviously we’d send the rambling roses. They might wander a bit but in time they’d get there. And they can be pretty fast on their stems when they want to be.”

“Hooray!” cried all the Kids, well, most of them. And they began to light out in the direction of the rosery — until Beau Nuss called them all to attention authoritatively.

“Waida minute!” he cried. “Why wait around for the roses to ramble there lackadaisically? Why don’t we go ourselves?”

The crowd stopped, turned, stared at each other, and grew deadly pale — as pale as plant people can get without actually wilting. “Good Garden!” exclaimed some of them, aghast. “You mean *leave*... go out of... the Charmed Garden? ourselves!?”

“But that’s fatal!” stammered Vera Lent. “Isn’t it?”

The crowd stopped looking pale and just looked interested. “Well,” said Will Ingley, “we’ve just established — say, *re-established* — that nothing is fatal in Oz. One can cut off one’s own head and kick it around for a football, and not die. But I’ve always understood that if we Careleavers dared venture out beyond the Garden Wall, we’d droop and pine and — well, just not be our real selves.”

“You know what?” said Anne O’Dine. “I’ll bet you that’s just propaganda put about to keep us from straying away from our duty as Careleavers. Has anyone ever *tried* leaving the Garden?”

They talked about it for hours and agreed that in floral memory there had never been a case of a resident plant’s venturing outside the Charmed Garden of Oz. Not as far as any of them had ever heard about. For daisies don’t keep diaries nor ranuncles chronicles.

So they tried it. Anyway it was no worse than staying where

they were. If they stayed where they were they'd "die" anyway — or, since death isn't allowed in Oz they'd be so sick and miserable they'd *wish* they were dead, though the wish be denied them. At least if they took to the road they'd be trying to do something about it.

And of course it wasn't "the road". Roads are the one place plants don't take to. When the Kids lit out they went straight across the fields in a bee-line. They had an old battered map of Oz so they knew pretty well which way to go. Only now and then they were forced onto a road—for the sake of its bridge—but they soon strayed from it again.

"Who shall go?" they said at the start. Every twig went up. "Well, we can't *all* go!" they exclaimed. So they left half of them behind to carry on the careleaving in the Garden and the rest all crowded out the famous ornamental gates and set off in a body.

It was really very charming to see the phalanx of plants moving purposefully across a blacky-green field or infiltrating a dark forest. With their bright-flowering—and only partly blight-spotted—heads it wasn't hard to keep them in view, so none of them lost touch with the main body of the pilgrims. The leggier plants moderated their speed to match that of the slower hikers; thus there wasn't too much trouble with stragglers.

Perhaps the worst problem they had was with well-wishers. People would see a crowd of panting pansies or pooped-out poppies and want to stop them and put them up for the night in their flower beds. "We'll just rest a minute," the travelers would say, "but flowers don't sleep, you know. The morning glories may act like they do, except in the morning but they're not the norm. Stopping to 'sleep' would just be losing our time. And we've got to get on to Glinda the Good."

"What for?" said the well-wishers.

"Well, look around you!" cried Al Luviul. "the world is eight shades darker just since as far back as I can remember. And it's getting worse. New plants can't get a start, the air and the soil are so poisoned. In our native garden there are huge bare patches

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where nothing will grow — and getting huger daily. That ol' noise has gotta cease," he ended dramatically, using a colloquialism of sixty years before.

"Hm, yes, we see what you mean," said the well-wishers. "The problem's been pretty bad for us humans too. Harvests are nothing like what they used to be, and there's so much waste from contamination — and... well, the earth just isn't as pretty a place as it once was."

"But," said the well-wishers' wives, "we figured it wasn't our place to complain. We know Princess Ozma's doing the best she can. She's sent a care package to every household in Oz, with pills and things to take against radiation and other poisoning. So nobody's really been sick. And you can't expect her to do anything about the weather!"

"No, of course not," said their eldest sons. "After all, the Princess isn't a god — goddess, I mean — though some people do sometimes act as if she is." The eldest sons were the bookish type and knew well what kind of reputation their girl ruler had been getting, out in the great world, during the last twenty years.

"But after all," summed up Frank N. Cense, "we can't just leave it at that. At least we plant people can't. It's worse for us."

"And you think Glinda...?"

"Yes," said Maude Lynn; "if anybody can help it's the great Sorceress of the South. She's the wisest person in Oz. We'll simply remind her about the cleanness and healthfulness and beauty that once were Oz's. She's just forgotten them... I guess. And we'll remind her. Tomorrow — or next day — she'll think of some way to get them back. After all, tomorrow is another day."

C H A P T E R T H R E E

The buildings of the University of Oz had by now grown grey—not to say black—with age. Or, to be truthful, if the brickwork was going black, it was not so much age that was doing it. Normally the ivy that covered the bricks would just be a rich dark green, particularly in the Emerald country of Oz, but these ivy leaves were all a ghastly metallic grey. However, the buildings *were* old. They'd soon be putting out stamps to commemorate the centenary of the College of Sports, as the highest-ranking institution of learning in the land was rather frivolously called at its first founding.

In those days the powers that were had wanted to do two things: to make fun of such institutions of higher learning as being just glorified sports clubs where the winning of a football game against West Kentucky Christian was much more important than any academic triumphs. Also, they wanted to please children by presenting a school where all hard industry and dedication were done away with and study depicted as a game. One simply took pills. that produced knowledge, and all the rest was just ice cream sodas, if not beer and skittles.

It hadn't proved good enough. There were no other colleges in Oz—nor yet across the deserts in other lands of faerie. The academic, the intellectual, was never catered for in the concep-

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tion of those magic lands, and the one college they had was only dreamed up as a venue for the popular self-appointed "Professor" Wogglebug. The result was that there was nobody for the College to compete against in sports!

The eventual upshot was that the student body at the College of Sports fell back, for occupation, on studies out of sheer boredom. The clever ones, of whom there were quite a number, actually began to take an interest. The first time a student asked a question of their professor that he hadn't a clue about he blushed yellow (that was the color of a Winkie insect's ichor) and straightway resolved to get an education, not just pretend to one.

Certainly there were books enough in the college library; wished there through magic by the wand of the fairy ruler Ozma. Unfortunately it soon became evident to the questing Wogglebug that planning in the administrative section of faerie left something to be desired. Ozma had probably wished something like "Let the library of the new College of Sports be fully stocked with books." It wasn't for Ozma, who, so far as was known, had never read one, to specify *which* books.

Wells The library was now found to contain Godey's *Ladies' Book* complete, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, *The Dunciad* of Pope, a first edition of *Through the Looking Glass*, Bowdler's *Shakespeare*, the complete works of Ethel M. Dell, four hundred volumes in Swahili and a hundred and fifty in Italian, and a complete run of *The Times's* of London and New York from the period of their founding to 1903.

Prof. Wogglebug began at the upper left corner of the remotest shelves and read the library through. That took him thirty years, not overdoing it. At the end of the period he sought and gained Queen Ozma's permission to change the name of the institution to the "College of Knowledge". *Sports* now became the only discipline that was taught by pills. Book-learning was once more to come from actual book learning. The professor had tried it and found it to be not too bad a method. Granted it was time-consuming. But in Oz they had all the time in the world. Why

not *take* time? and get a thorough grounding.

H.M. Wogglebug, T.E., conferred upon himself the title of Doctor Emeritus. After that he preferred to be known as "Dr. Em." Wogglebug. Other graduates followed thick and fast, faculties proliferated, the plant expanded vastly, so that Princess/Queen Ozma, coming once on a state visit, said to the greatly pleased Doctor, "This isn't just a college any more, Professor. It's a University." And such, from that very day, it was.

Dr. Em. Wogglebug designed the university crest himself. Some parts of its branching pattern strangely resembled insect antennae, while the central shield was striped in gold and white. Underneath was the legend "Entomos est veritas."

But what about that library, the great gaps in which the professor was by now all too much aware of? They might hand out degrees on the basis of the jumble of information one could get from reading bound volumes of the *Edinburgh Chronicle* 1774-1823 but it wasn't consequential advanced learning. The Wogglebug became a true intellectual snob, rating learning over all else, and was unhappy because his graduates couldn't *really* do anything academic that was important.

"Princess Ozma," he said, having made in person a journey into town and to the Palace of Magic, "may I be allowed to go into the world outside and order in the books we need so badly at the University?"

Ozma was rather taken aback. Despite the letting down of frontier barriers in the course of the twentieth century, with resultant near-swarfing of outlanders into Oz (as well as a certain amount of travel, also in the opposite direction), she was at bottom suspicious of intercourse between the two worlds. Oz was Oz just because it was remote from everything in the humdrum world of reality. If it were to become a trippers' haunt as accessible as Acapulco or Ierapetra, where would be the magic of it? And if you didn't want contamination from strangers in Oz you didn't really want it being brought *back* into Oz by natives either.

Still, she let him go. His motive was a noble one and after all

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one didn't want to prevent the *learning* of the great world from reaching the smaller, magic one. Since no one else in Oz was even remotely to be compared with the professor in acquaintance with what volumes (and other equipment) were wanted, it had to be he who went—if any one.

"But a wogglebug out in the great world?" protested the princess. "Is such a thing feasible?" Even the girl ruler, after so many decades, had got into the way of thinking that magic, and the results of it, couldn't function outside the magical continent of Sempernunquam and its immediate environs.

"Good heavens, your majesty," cried the doctor emeritus, whose memory for trifles was no doubt better trained than his sovereign's, "don't you recall that I myself had a success-filled sojourn in America soon after our adventures aboard the flying Gump?"

Ozma's brow creased just slightly. "Why, yes, of course..."

"The time I fell in love with the Wagnerian plaid?" the professor reminisced. "I still have my living room suite at home upholstered in it—just to remind me."

"Dear me, yes," concurred the ruler. "And though there was a prat-fall or two, so I understood, still you did return to Oz all in one piece and no worse for the experience."

"And a bit wiser," bragged the bug.

"But tell me," said Ozma, "how did people react when they saw a six-foot wogglebug approaching them? I mean; wogglebugs are unknown in America, so I believe."

"Oh, they simply assessed me as a common or garden beetle—a bit out-size—but then they just figured I was from Texas, so that was all right."

"Well, good," exhaled the ruler.

"Oh, one or two thought I was an earwig," added the insect, being perfectly truthful. "And one rude fellow said 'Cockroach'."

"That *was* rude," concurred the princess and laughed merrily. Then she grew grave again. "I wonder, though, if this time you wouldn't care to be disguised a bit. In view of your important mission, you see. You wouldn't want people hesitat-

ing before conferring with you on serious matters, I know.”

The professor thought that over. Of course he was inordinately proud of his unique—if not shape, at least size. Actually, it was the combination of shape *and* size that was so different. He couldn’t imagine that others would ever fail to be as impressed as himself.

In her own mind the fairy princess was following his line of thought. People *were* going to be impressed. And then, “Zoos,” she warned softly.

“Zoos?” echoed the wogglebug, all perplex.

“Or at least; A zoo.”

“You don’t mean—! Your majesty’s not hinting—!?”

“Well, yes, I’m afraid I am,” confessed Ozma. “Let’s face it; you’re a unique bug. Those Americans: you know what they are; they want to own the biggest and best. Could they see you and not want to deprive you of your liberty by—er, imprisoning you in a menagerie?”

The danger was real and the professor recognized it. He’d have broken out now in a cold sweat—if insects *could* sweat—to think how he’d avoided that fate in 1904. But *then* America was not yet the zealous leader in all scientific and scholarly pursuits that it had since become. He wouldn’t be able to walk down Broadway *now* without being apprehended and hustled off to confinement—or anyway mugged. What to do?

“Easy,” said Ozma. “I’ll cast a spell over you—not to turn you into another shape you could be awkward in or unhappy with - but just so that you’ll *look*, to anyone in the world outside, like an ordinary inoffensive un-surprising-appearing scholar.”

So that’s what she did.

C H A P T E R F O U R

The first arrivals from abroad were of course Nick's oldest friends, Dorothy and the Scarecrow. Well, actually Nick Chopper had older friends than that; during the day his ex-fiancée Nimmi Aimee arrived with her husband to pay their respects. Even if the girl had chosen another in preference to the woodman who'd turned into tin, there was no outright disaffection between the former couple. Anyway Nimmi was just human enough to delight in the gala occasion of a trip abroad and a reception by royalty—even if she did 'know him when'.

Arid yes, there was another friend who antedated the Emperor's traveling companions of a century before. He too arrived in the afternoon, long after the bittersweet reunion of Dorothy and the Scarecrow with their comrade was past. This was the tinsmith (let's face it; the tin-*plate*-smith) who had first set Nick Chopper's replacement legs on the path to fame and fortune.

Stan Ferrum had had a great success in his chosen line of work after the ascendance of his product, the Tin Woodman. The curiously built forester's brilliant rise to glory had made metal limbs all the rage for a time. Though nobody was so careless—or, as Nick himself claimed, bewitched—as to cut off

his own extremities in the desire to get prosthetes of sheet metal, still, when a disabling accident did happen, many men (somehow ladies didn't take to it) requested the replacement of missing parts with metal ones. Captain Fyter was the example who gained greatest renown, sharing^s as he did an adventure with the tin emperor himself. In time, however, a good deal of the captain's thunder was stolen by tin milkmen, tin postmen, tin icemen, tin dustmen, tin doormen, tin footmen, and tin firemen who came to the Munchkin tinsmith maimed and went away wholly metal.

Now here was Stan Ferrum come all the way from his rural village in Munchkinland to hail his famous protégé one hundred and one years after the great replacement. In his company was a whole platoon of tin people and great was the noise of clinking and crickling as they jostled for positions around the celebratory emperor's sickbed.

"But, your highness!" they cried in consternation, "we had no idea! Is it...? it isn't... ! EYDS^{ss}?"

"Mmm, I'm afraid so," murmured the invalid and plucked a little at the coverlet. "Just like yourselves. I see there's not a one of you either but—"

"You're right," put in their spokesman, who was none other than Capt. Fyter himself. "We've all been attacked - and it's an attack there's no repulsing. Not when the very air is charged with the destroyer! But we thought it was only disfiguring.

The grey patches *look* awful. We'd no idea it could go beyond that...!"

"I fear so," confirmed the Woodman quietly. "I'll tell you my theory. As you rightly say, it's in the air. Here, as in very many parts of the world, the prevailing winds are westerly. Bearing their great loads of impurities, they come from the west across the great desert. The Winkie country is the first to suffer from the winds' unloading of their filth. But, Oz itself being pure, the winds and clouds gather no further grime as they blow across

§ See *The Tin Woodman of Oz*

§§ Electroplated yeoman's disease of the skin. Editor's notes.

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the country and so are marginally cleaner by the time they reach you in Munchkinland. Perhaps not much; just the difference between life and destruction." And here the Emperor shed a single regretful tear.

The tin men were silent. There seemed nothing to say. It was a shock for them to here be witnesses of the dissolution that in time awaited themselves. It was no good protesting that "something ought to be done about it". Obviously the both intelligent and powerful tin ruler would have done something about it if there had been anything about it to be done.

In the midst of their silent consternation a new delegation of visitors was announced. "Your Majesty," said Palace Steward Ojo, "a deputation from the Noble Order of Woodmen of the World."

Then entered they. First, two men in red, wearing the bow tie and spats that had become traditional in Oz for woodcutters since the time when the future Emperor of the Winkies made them famous.

Dorothy had once asked her friend why he wore those garments on going into the forest to chop trees. The tin man would have blushed if he could. "It—it was the tinsmith's fault," he stammered and was not exactly truthful. "Once they were soldered on I couldn't get them off."

"But, Nick," protested the logical-minded Kansas girl, "why would he have chosen those articles of apparel for you? They aren't at all typical of Munchkins in general. Why, I suppose no one would put on spats unless he was trying to look *very* fashionable." (This was said in 1909.)

Nick blushed an even deeper shade of nickel.

"Now, Dorothy," he reproached. "I'm not a vain man. It says so right there on page 127^s."

"How very odd," said Dorothy thoughtfully, and remained puzzled. She did not forget the little passage, however, and on this very day, at Chopper's centenary reception, she made occasion to ask Stan Ferrum the tinsmith what he had had in

§ See *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*. Editor's note.

mind when he thus costumed in perpetuity the modest tin man.

“Gosh, don’t ask me, Doctor,” said the man respectfully. “When the Woodman came to me, hopping the mile or two from the woods on one leg, I simply matched up on the new left metal leg what I saw he was wearing on the right.”

“Oh, Nick, the old darling!” cried Dorothy, knowing at last after all these years just how dandyish the Tin Woodman had in fact really been. “He was felling trees, wearing spats!?”

“And a bow tie,” added the tinsmith, “and his smartest Eton jacket.”

“But what in the world...?”

“In his agony, the time he chopped his body in two, I heard him murmur the name of Miss Nimmi Aimee. I think he realized then, too late, that when the last of his natural body went...”

Dorothy was silent, in awe. “He was doing it to impress *her*,” she breathed. “In case Nimmi Aimee came along while he was cutting trees, he had to be well groomed.” Perhaps she had never realized before just how deeply smitten Chopper had been—until he chopped away the heart that did the loving.

An ancient vanity then—or let us say, a, desperate desire to impress favorably a lady fair—had dictated what would be worn on this day of all days by the two red-velvet-suited woodcutters from the land of the Quadlings as they entered the sick-room and marched to Nick Chopper’s bedside.

A similar outfit in purple was worn by two men who came after: woodmen from the woodsiest region of Oz, the northern land of the Gillikins. Two yellow-attired men appeared next. From the smaller lands of Oz, the orange and the green, came one delegate each, for in truth those two principalities were relatively lacking in forests. Finally strode in two fellows in blue jackets and spats, Munchkin woodcutters, the role of one of whom might have been taken by Nicholas Chopper himself a century before.

With the crowd of tin men the newcomers formed a big ‘U’ around the patient’s bed. They stared gravely at the Tin

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Woodman and then burst into tears. This wasn't at all what they had been expecting. The Emperor himself, never slow to weep, joined the chorus. Afterwards he mopped his face a bit desultorily. When your legs have corroded off, who cares about a little creaking of the jaws?

Waldo Baumschneider, of the Unnikeg Baumschneiders, was the first to break the noise. "Your highness," he gasped, "what is the meaning of it all?"

"'Meaning'?" snuffled Nick. "Hardly any 'meaning', I should think."

"Well, cause," returned Baumsehneider. "How does it happen that we find you seemingly totally incapacitated? We heard nothing—"

"No, the final breakdown only took place day before yesterday. There was no time to send word and cancel the—er, melancholy occasion."

Legno Tagliabosco of Quadlinga took up the word: "But what can have brought Your Majesty so low?" he wanted to know. "This is Oz and things like this can't happen! No one can die!" he protested excitedly.

"No, but they can be destroyed," reminded the imperial invalid. "That's what's happening to me."

"But by what?" insisted Albero Boscaiolo, the other Quadling.

"Pollution," answered the Tin Woodman starkly.

C H A P T E R F I V E

The delegation of plants made its way slowly southward. It only took a few months. Legged plants unique to Oz, the result of accouplement (carried out frightfully discreetly, practically *in vitro*) by plants with humans, were able to live divorced from the soil. They were ambulatory but in virtually every other respect were fully vegetal. Hence they had constantly to stop and put down a feeder root to have a guzzle of soil nutrients—and the time they spent drinking was unbelievable. On the other hand, they loved the rain, and yet could stay outdoors for unlimited amounts of time in the unbroken sunshine, and they never needed to sleep. Now they made steady progress onward, though slow. The sunflowers could have galloped on ahead but they waited politely for the violets and forgetmenots to trip daintily and diminutively along beside them.

The plants had been under weigh for two and a half weeks when the expedition suffered its first major delay. A party of catmint suddenly set up a wail, and before the rest of the-traveling multitude knew what was happening a puthy cat came bounding from the deep grass on a hill slope and landed square among the shuddering blue flowerlets.

“Help, help!” screamed the mint flowers as down they went under the delighted paws and body of the cat. The cat was

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all set to enjoy itself, and it didn't mean any harm. Cats don't actually destroy the catmint, they just love the smell, and to roll in it and be *with* it. Oh, they might desultorily chew a few stalks, but it isn't the *taste* of it, you know, it's the odor.

Well, this pussy (called Aloysius Pussy) got a f right. Never before had it know catmint to fight back. It fled incontinently up the hill to a custard cottage on the top.

There, it would seem, the pussy had a conference with its owners, for in a moment the green jelly door flew open again and two young children came running down the slope. Running in every sense of the word. These, you see, were the Sticky Twins, also known as Dot and Tot at the time of their adventures in Merryland [See the appropriately titled volumes. E.n.] and as Twink and Tom during their travels with the Shaggy Man, in mid-century. Now they were living in retreat under the names of Fweetie and Thyugar and trying to go straight. So far they hadn't had much success and when, as now, they got excited they didn't need to take a step in order to melt and run all over the place.

When they had run down the slope to where the Careleaver Kids stood nodding in the breeze and staring curiously, Fweetie said, "Oh, how pretty!"

And Thyugar echoed, "So thweet! "

Anne Drogeny said, "You mean us?"

"Yeth," gushed Thyugar. "You're just the sweetest things!"

"You look pretty sweet yourself," remarked Ella Mentle. "Isn't that icing on your heads? And if I'm not mistaken you're dressed in syrup...?"

"Yeth," assented Fweetie. "We've been trying to clean up our act but it hasn't been easy. Up till now Aloysius has had to do the cleaning up for us." Indeed, the Kids observed how the cat was licking up the trail of sweet drippings that led from the Twins back up the hill to the little house. "But," continued Freetie, "we just had to come see, when the puthy-cat told us there was a troop of walking flowers passing by. You see, we just love anything pretty.

"Yes, mother taught us to be that way," supplied Thyugar.

“Who was your mother?” asked Bob Tayle.

“Why, Mother Goofe, of course,” stated the twins simultaneously, surprised that anyone should not know who the author of all darling goodness and sweetness and prettiness was. “She always said we should keep away from everything bad and hurtful and real and just stick to everything nice. And so that it would be easier for us she made us out of spun sugar and honey and cream and perfume and gossamer and taught us always to go dressed in butterscotch or caramel—or chocolate, when we were going formal.”

“Does it never get just the least bit... cloying?” asked Ruth Lesce.

“All the time,” confessed Thyugar. “We fight it—but there you are: it’s our nature. But, oh—!” Here Thyugar began to flick ineffectually with viscid hands at big flaky smuts that were settling on her(?) slippery sleeves. “This dirt in the air is too awful. Quick! let’s go back in the house. Aren’t you bothered by it?”

“Indeed we are,” assured Tom Eighto.

“We’re on our way right now to the court of Glinda the Good to see if she can’t do something about it .”

“Oh, what a good idea,” squeaked Fweetie . “*Please!* take with you the ardent wishes of *everyone* we’ve spoken to for—oh, years and years.”

“Oh, longer, sweetings,” contradicted Thyugar lovingly. “I’d say nearer years and *years* and years that people dropping—often, gumdropping—in here have complained about the frightful air pollution. Well, it’s kept us under house-arrest; we just don’t almost ever dare to go outside any more.”

Soon all the flowers that could crowd into the cottage had crowded in and the hum of voices and the scent of sweets and flowers were nearly overpowering. The Sticky Twins were in seventh heaven and thought they’d never had such a chance or would again, to swoon at the sight of so much floral beauty. They quickly got on the phone and rang round to all their friends to say they were giving a reception for the Careleaver Kids that very evening.

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That meant the Kids were trapped. It would be an awful breach of manners to decamp and leave the twins to receive their guests alone. The most they could prevail on their hosts to do was to open a window, or, for preference, several. Then they formed a receiving line.

One of the early arrivals was the crow Kaggi-Karr, associate of the famous Scarecrow of Oz in an alternate-universe version of the magic land, who was staying in the neighborhood. She occasionally crossed over to this “sequence” to have a taste of life in an Oz totally different from the one she knew.

“Pwuhh!” snorted the crow, flying in the open window to perch on Fweetie’s head, then hastily thinking better of it (when she realized the twin’s ‘hair’ was like birdlime) and moving to the bust of Pallas up above the chamber door. “That was awful. Shut the windows, some body, please. Why have you got them open?”

“It was so stuffy in here,” reported Norm Allitee, “*And* warm, and our hosts were starting to run - and we didn’t wanted to be parted from them yet a while.”

“Anyway it’s awful,” Kaggi-Karr grouched on, “the air, I mean. Is it always like this nowadays?! It’s worse than the Yellow Fog!”

“Oh? what’s that?” asked Jan U. Ary.

“The Fog^s?” cawed Kaggi. “Oh, that was a rather fun thing—I *don’t* think—we had in the alternate Magic Land some years back. A terrible old witch threw a spell over the country and we all nearly smothered before we managed to overcome her and turn off the fog.”

“I’m glad we don’t have anything like that,” put in Thyugar and shivered delicately.

“Are you kidding!” barked the crow. “This is worse. At least the Fog didn’t smell bad. This is like rotting eggs—or worse, actually. What *is* it like?” She reflected. “It’s like the stink from some of the volcanoes of the south. Have you got volcanoes

§ See *Yellow Fog Over Oz*. Editor’s note.

around here?"

"There's a small one a couple of doors down," informed Fweetie. "But it's not working at the moment, I understand."

"Well, you ought to do something about it!"

"We are!" piped up a round robin that had made it in before the windows were shut. "I'm here to collect your signatures to a petition for our rulers to take steps concerning the bad air—and the deterioration in the quality of life generally in these times. I've already got 6321 names..." It was rather a large robin.

"All birds, I suppose?" said Dick Tait.

"No!" disclaimed the robin. "I've got chipmunks, gala monsters, narwhals, ocelots, water buffaloes, piranhas, barn owls, lemmings, orangutans, penguins, and opossums. I think that's a pretty broad spectrum. In fact I didn't find one soul who thought conditions were all right and that nothing needed to be done."

"Well! what are we waiting for?" crowed the crow. "Let's get up a delegation and go off to your ruler—let's see, that's—oh, what's her name? I had it on the tip of my tongue."

"Ozma?"

"That's it! I'll even volunteer to head the group, bringing her the humble petition of the entire animal kingdom that she *do* something about it."

"We already are," put in Billy Doo diffidently.

"Are what?" snapped Kaggi-Karr.

"On our way to a ruler to get help against the pollution—only we thought we'd go to Queen Glinda, who might know more about such things."

So of course the crow had to hear the whole story. She *had* been rather wondering what this crowd of walking flowers was doing, crammed in the deserted cottage; I guess she didn't listen very carefully to her original invitation by the Twins. The upshot was that the Careleaver Kids stayed on until the next morning, discussing plans with the others. It was only at noon next day that they could get on their way again—as Kaggi-Karr and the Round Robin flew off to the Emerald City to confer with the Girl Ruler of All Oz about the crisis.

C H A P T E R S I X

It was the hundredth anniversary of the famous journey described in *Our Hundred Days in Europe* and Ozma knew it. Oh, not from prior knowledge. She'd simply asked Dr. Em. Wogglebug for a picture of a professor to go by and he'd pointed to the copperplate frontispiece of Oliver Wendell Holmes. That's the reason it appeared that the ghost of Dr. Holmes was haunting his native city a hundred years after anyone expected to meet him there.

"Be careful," Ozma had warned. Then she twirled her wand and the professor found his broadcloth dresscoat pocket filled with Citybank travelers' checks. "And now, away with you! Good lucks!" And the bug was disposed of.

Fortunately the professor's apparition took shape in the middle of the Common, so there was nobody (except a tramp picking up butts) to be startled by the sudden appearance of a gentleman in formal clothes a century out of date where no such gentleman had been before. The tramp thought he was in no position to complain to the police, so he merely scuttled off.

Dr. Em. Wogglebug strolled to the nearest bordering street, gasping a little in the monoxide-flavored air. At Tremont Street he quailed. How was he to cope in the torrent of wheeled traffic that poured along bumper to bumper? But then he reflected that

in twenty-four hours (he glanced at his wrist watch) precisely Ozma would whisk him back to Oz. All he *really* had to do was just keep alive till then.

The professor was not quite gormless. Held read up in his library on modern-day life in America in particular and on Boston in general, so he knew you could get anything in the world in the U.S.A. if you just had money enough. He patted his breast pocket reassuringly and when the traffic stopped up, due to a red light or collision a mile or two on down, he whisked open the back door of a taxi and hopped in. Pleasingly it was unoccupied.

"Dove vai?" said the driver.

"A l'Università.. Harvard. Entrata principale " replied the Wogglebug. Reading those 150 volumes in Italian (with the aid of a *parleur*) was now proving its usefulness.

Riding past Old North Church the professor was startled and said, "Oh, look, there's a sign in English!" and then, recollecting himself, added, "Scusate! Ho veduto qualcosa scritta nell'inglese. Non l'avevo aspettato."

That broke the ice and they chatted agreeably of recent events in the old countries as they rode along for miles under and then upon the elevated highways. "It reminds me of New York," said the professor, still speaking Italian and harking back to memories of more than half a century earlier. "Only there of course it was the railroads that were elevated. And I think the laundry hung out the windows wasn't so grey in those days."

"Yeah, it's getting pretty bad," agreed the cabbie. "But what the heck, we gotta pay a little price .for progress."

"'Progress'. Hm. How do you define that word?" the bug asked interestedly. This was sociology in action.

"Oh, more gadjets," replied the driver carelessly. Then, as they waited in another back-up, he thought the matter over. "More technology. More industry. Uhh... more people... More dirt!" he finished with a wry laugh.

"But the quality of life?" said the Ozite, thinking always of the bigger picture.

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“Oh, that’s the same as it ever way,” said the taxi man with matter-of-fact insight. “How good life is doesn’t depend on technology. It’s based on personal relations. Human nature hasn’t improved any though. There’s just a lot more of us around now to run up against.”

That did seem to sum up the case. Boston looked much more crowded than lower Manhattan had in 1904, and for sure it was dirtier. But then, what was the only thing that the unaided human creature could produce by itself? Dirt. And more people! It stood to reason that everywhere, as the numbers of humans increased geometrically, the amount of filth would also multiply in matching proportion.

“Of course your government is taking steps to limit population?” the professor carried on.

“Sei pazzo?!” cried the cabbie. “Take sway the last and most precious liberty of the individual? to reproduce himself as much as he likes? That’ll be the day.”

The wogglebug was thoughtful. Right now the view was filled by motor vehicles (admittedly, only one individual in each, except exceptionally) as far as the eye could see. That might be all very well now (though it was a little hard to breathe already). But just think; in only thirty-four years there would be twice as many people on earth as now in 1987. And in sixty-five years *four* times as many! The professor could picture the sky black and the mob motionless, as having no space to move in.

The depressing thought was cut short by their turning off the throughway, and in a moment Dr.Em. Wogglebug was deposited at the cellar car-entrance to the campus.

“Oh, you’d want Dr. Winerich,” said the girl in Reception. “He’s Chief of Holdings. I’ll just see if he’s in. Who shall I say it is?”

“Oh, Dr. Winerich won’t know my name. Just say a colleague from the University of Oz.”

“‘Oz’ . That’s A-H-S-E?” The young lady jotted. The professor informed her and she made a little production of using her eraser. “If you’ll just have a seat.”

It was only moments after an hour later that Dr. Em. Wogglebug shook hands with the librarian. "Oz, I think Miss Goldfarb said," said Dr. Winerich. "A pleasure to meet you, sir." It seemed to the Ozite that the Chief of Holdings quizzed him rather intently.

Succinctly but very genially the Wogglebug stated his mission; a library of the highest order was to be supplied to his university. Where better in the world could he seek guidance as to acquisitions than at the Library of Harvard?

"Splendid! We'll run you off a listing of our entire holdings on microfilm," offered Dr. Winerich.

"Microfilm'?" repeated Dr. Em. W. The learned one had, with embarrassment, to confess total unfamiliarity with the concept.

Dr. Winerich explained, then immediately understood that, if microfilm was unknown at the foreign university, means for making use of it would be equally unavailable. He continued; "We'll do you an off-print on flimsies. It'll be rather bulky..."

"No problem," said the Wogglebug, who had no other luggage. "I'll probably be able to carry it? on my person?"

"Oh, yes, I think so."

"It will be only as far as the nearest reliable book purveyors. Which would you recommend?"

Dr. Winerich told him; warehouses and dealers' depositories in Boston and New York. Then he accompanied his visitor to the top of the staircase. "By the way," he said genially, "will you be paying a visit to the University of Wyoming while you're over here?"

"Why, no," admitted the Doctor Emeritus, "I hadn't thought of it. How so?"

"They have the largest archive of Oz-related materials in this country. You might be interested in looking over their collections."

"That *would* be interesting."

"Ask for Dr. Allan Trosius there," advised the librarian, "—and convey my cordial greet—"

Prof. Wogglebug stopped and stared at the worthy academic

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who likewise had stopped and was staring at a bust that occupied a place of honor near the head of the staircase. Dr. Winerich turned his head to look at the visiting professor and then back at the sculpted head, under which was a small metal plate that read; "Author of *The Autocrat of the Breakfast Table*, "The Chamber'd Nautilus", *Elsie Venner*, etc. Professor of Anatomy for 35 years."