
C H A P T E R S E V E N

The crowd in the Emperor's bedroom talked on into the night. The weeping of the flesh woodmen and the crying of the tin calmed down after about an hour and the concerned friends of the Tin Woodman formed the F.T.W., or "Friends of the Tin Woodman", and held their first plenary meeting, after swearing an oath not to rest until the air pollution that was ruining life in Oz had been done away with, soot and stench.

"How can we?!" was the great question voiced in its classic form for the first time by Forrest Sawyer and written into the constitution; 'What can be done to stop pollution?'

"Go to the source," said the Tin Woodman in a still small voice.

"But that's—" said Forrest and then fell silent in awe.

"Exactly," confirmed the Emperor. "This pestilence is worldwide—and not of Oz origin. It is, quite succinctly, the seemingly unavoidable concomitant of worldwide industry; worldwide with the exception of the Oz continent."

At that a lot of the men trembled and grew pale. They had never been outside of the confines of Oz and were much under the impression of the dreadful tales they had heard of the great world: the rampant crime, the universal violence, and the forerunners of the Third World War which were raging

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intermittently in southern Africa, the Gulf states, the East Indies, and Central America. "Does Your Majesty mean actually go to the source?" wondered a metal mail-man. "Not just fly over and drop leaflets?"

"Those, I'm afraid, would never be noticed in the general litter," said Chopper solemnly, "—or so I've heard it described."

The crowd consternated a bit and then Captain Fyter said, "I'm not afraid. I'll go!"

Now the captain was known rather for bravery than for brains. This the woodman Emperor had to point out delicately. With a cambric handkerchief he wiped away another tear, touched at such devotion and gallantry on the part of his old friend. "I am afraid, Lance—that it just wouldn't do. It's diplomats who'll be wanted, not soldiers. It must be a campaign of words, not deeds."

"Please tell us what you have in mind, your highness," said the green woodman. "It's like this," explained the Emperor. "We in Oz could protect ourselves. Some sort of shield could be erected whereby the soiling of our air, not to mention our soil, could be stopped. But that would only be getting at the *result* of the evil, not the cause. The latter is what I think we must try to combat because if we do not conditions here and everywhere can only get worse. We're fortunate that worldwide sea pollution has not also affected us but that too will come in time. All the lands beyond the deserts will feel it. We can't just rest content in our hallowed isolation here in Oz. For the sake of the whole world we must go out and do what we can."

"But what *can* we do?" repeated several voices at once.

"*Talk to them!*" cried the Woodman, all aflame. "Get them to change their ways!"

Unfortunately nobody else seemed to take fire at that proposal.

"Talk"? But humans had been doing that for fifty centuries or more without it getting them anywhere. It might on the contrary be better if they shut up for a spell. If they looked rather than listened it would strike them all in no time what awful shape

the world was in and then they might *do* (rather than say) something about it.

However, "Tell us more, your majesty," entreated Coupeur du Bois of the Gillikins.

"Well, I thought it might just be possible that some of you able-bodied ones could go to the leaders out in the great world and offer advice about the problem. You'd have credentials from Ozma, of course, so I don't doubt but what you'd get a hearing."

I think it was fondness for the popular ruler rather than any conviction about the possibility of success of such a venture that caused some three or four in the crowd to throw up their hats mid cry, "Long live the Emperor of the Winkies! As his loyal men, we'll go!" And there was a great creaking and clanking of metal parts.

"Oh, I didn't mean you tin fellows," Nick hastened to explain. "We'd want all the credibility we can get. I'm afraid when the great-worlders got a look at you plated gentlemen, they just wouldn't believe."

"We could pretend we were from Disneyuniverse," suggested one.

"Then they might *believe* but they wouldn't pay any attention. No, I think we'll want folks who can mingle with the crowd and not look conspicuous."

The flesh woodmen looked at each other and then at their formerly flesh colleague. "I guess you mean as, your highness," said Woody Hackett. 38/

"Yes!" exclaimed the Tin Woodman, cheered that the penny had dropped at last. Actually, he was rather disappointed that the proposal hadn't come from the ten woodmen themselves, However... "You can be fitted out with attaché cases and hom-burgs and make a splendid impression."

"But what are we to offer them as a measure against the ravages of industrial pollution?"

"Why, magic!" said the Emperor.

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“Pollution,” said the Good Witch of the South. “That’s the problem.”

“Don’t we know it!” rejoined Ken Ettick jauntily. “The question is: where’s it coming from? And what can we do about it?”

“You all received your care packages from Princess Ozma, didn’t you?” enquired the red ruler. “That’s supposed to be sufficient to maintain health in all the sentient citizens of Oz.”

“Okay,” said Al Jebra. (There are no crowned heads in the Charmed Garden and the Kids were a bit unsure what tone to adopt in addressing royalty.) “But that’s for us ‘sentient’ ones. A lot of us in the Garden *ain’t* sentient; leastways they can’t open a care package and read the directions. The result is they’re keeling over and lying there just as if they were—er, destroyed.”

“Yes,” said Phil Anthropy, “and worse than that: new plants just aren’t getting a start at all. The Garden’s turning into a desert, and a black one at that.”

“We really do feel, your grace,” said Greg Areus, “that eventually something drastic and permanent will have to be done. Since we plants are going to be the first to be decimated if conditions keep on, we thought we ought to be the first to let you know how bad things are really getting.

“I’m very grateful to you,” acknowledged Glinda, “for your

public-spirited-ness. Of *course* something must be done, and of course I've long been aware of the problem. However, since its source is abroad I hardly could see what I *could* do. You ask where the pollution is coming from. It comes from the great industrial world outside, which is to say; all the planet beyond our own continent of Sempernunquam. The growth of industry has been remarkable. The last of the undeveloped regions have come up to the general high level of technology, the last trees in the Amazon were removed last year, and *this* year the United States achieved the distinction of being the first country to be fully paved from coast to coast. Naturally there are 'marginal side effects', as they term them, from all this spectacular growth. The last trees in *Europe* were also removed last year, but unintentionally. People in the great world are finding it convenient to live in great underground complexes, where all air is filtered before it reaches them—"

The sorceress looked like she was going to carry on indefinitely describing the wonders of technological civilization but happily Connie Feruss interrupted her:

"Would we want that here?"

"No," said Glinda, coming to her senses.

"What are we going to do about it then?"

"To protect Oz?"

"Yes. We thought," carried on Chris Cross "you would be able to do something by magic.

"Yes," agreed the sorceress pensively, "there are measures that might be taken. But right at the start there are two problems. One: even magic has its limitations. I could erect a shield around the whole country. I wouldn't presume to do it for the entire continent, over the rest of which our ruler has of course no jurisdiction. Such an enclosing canopy would keep out airborne pollution, the great villain of the piece. But it would also keep out air! When we had breathed up the Oxygen within the shield, what then? Not to speak of all the other life-giving phenomena of nature that we would be cut off from. It could never rain or snow in Oz again, and soon all our plant life, yourselves

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included, would wilt as our water supply disappeared. Once more: what then?"

The Kids were more than depressed, and showed it. But finally Ed U. Cayshun said faintly; "What was the other problem, your grace?"

Glinda went on; "Whether without first getting their permission, I would be justified in taking steps single-handed," she said, rather mixing her metaphors, "that would affect every creature in Oz."

"Oh, yes!" cried the Careleaver Kids in chorus; "we found out that much on our way here." Then they described the encounters they had had upon their journey, with emphasis on the Round Robin's petition. "That's right," said the Southern Sorceress. "I ran into Princess Ozma yesterday at the Tin Woodman's reception and she told me about that. She feels as you—and all of us—do; that the thing cannot be put off longer. but she hardly knew what to suggest. Nor do I, but I've begun thinking in terms of that big magic canopy or dome I mentioned—"

Glinda broke off as the videophone on a ruby magazine stand beside -the throne chimed. "Excuse me... Yes... Why, Nick, how nice to hear from you! Are you feeling any better?... Oh-h... It was so kind of you to receive us all. I hope it didn't exhaust you..."

"Yes, I know. It's simply frightful, isn't it?"

"What? Oh, splendid. Really? The F.T.W.?" Glinda jotted something. "Of course! Delighted. Yes, certainly; right now.

"Fine. I'll call back after we've met." The good witch put down the receiver and looked out across the gently undulating host of flowers before her throne.

"Emperor Nick. You heard. Now, kids, quickly, if you will; move back - say about five yards - on all sides, away from right here in front of my seat, all right? We're going to have visitors!

"Yes, it seems this grave problem is coming to a head all over. The Emperor of the Winkies—he's unable to come himself, of course—is sending a delegation of ten here to discuss

ways and means of getting at the source of this evil. Good for Nick! he's thought further than I. He wants to send this party out into the world and try to put a stop to the pollution right at the source—"

The Sorceress had got no :further than that when with a queer, loud, but muffled pflop! ten men in rainbow colors with axes on their shoulders appeared in the course of a split second on the cleared area of the polished carnelian floor.

If that was startlement enough for all concerned, there yet happened something else in the moment that followed which would have at a later time farther-reaching and longer-lasting effects. That thing was this:

The ten woodmen gasped at their sudden displacement, gawked at the red ruler on the royal chair before them, and then turned to look in awe around the great chamber where swayed, like the fairest garden field that had been seen in Oz in many years, a thousand flowers.

The woodmen saw what they had been missing in their lives but had missed so gradually that they were hardly aware of it. The Careleaver Kids in all their bedraggled finery had of course had a run under the showers before presenting themselves for their audience with Glinda, so now they nodded and tilted in the throne room as raindrop fresh as flower fields had used to be before the first internal-combustion engine exploded into life. The sight was ravishing, and the woodmen were ravished.

While Glinda and her lady attendants watched, the woodmen stepped gently among the flower throng and picked a violet here, a carnation there, a nasturtium yonder, and stuck them in their buttonholes. Then they turned back to the Quadling Queen and reported for service.

C H A P T E R N I N E

Dr. Em. Wogglebug leaned over the tall blond student's shoulder. "What's that, Henk?"

The tall blond student flushed, but made no attempt to hide his work. "Oh, just doodling, really... But—er—I had an idea."

"Go on." The bug perched on a high architect's stool and crossed some of his limbs over a knee.

"Well, it's this air impurity. I was wondering if there wasn't some way we could install filters—like over a whole house, or even a whole community."

"Technically the thing is possible," encouraged the Wogglebug. "Same such scheme was being discussed already in the sixties, out in the great world... though of course in those days it was with the idea of weather and temperature control."

"I know. I've been reading up on it. They've got quite a lot on it in the New Wing..."

"Mm, the New Wing," murmured Prof. Wogglebug and felt again a glow of satisfaction. That was where the one million books lived that he had brought back from America.

"Their idea in those days was just to keep the weather out and have an even fixed humidity. Never rain or ice or storms. What I was thinking, of was a way to let the weather *in*, only filtering out all the impurities.

We'd want the snow, we just wouldn't want the sulphuric acid. We'd want the sunshine but not the harmful ultra-violet. And so on."

"How far have you got?" Dr. Em Wogglebug was now quite serious, all thought of twitting a day-dreaming student forgotten.

"Well, the physical shell is easy. There's the lay-out for that—" Henk pointed to a thin sheaf of large semi-transparent sheets. "It's the air-filtering process I've been puzzling over. I think I might have it though. See?: blowers that operate at right angles to each other in layers: the vertical ones maintain the supply of 'fresh' outer air, the horizontal ones blow out the impurities. And they don't take up all that much space—"

The two academics kept it up for forty minutes and then adjourned to the college bar for rum(-flavored) rickies. By then the main outlines of a complete atmosphere-filter plant to serve the entire land of Oz were well established in the minds of both scientists.

"But won't it be a colossal physical undertaking?" the Professor still hedged. "You've got not only to plan the mechanics of the filter-dome itself but you must grapple with the sheer logistics of *raising* such a dome. That's a whole different barrel of engineering."

"I've put a lot of thought into that too, Doc," returned Henkomankatogale. "But—here in Oz at least—that part should be easy. We just do it by magic!"

"Wppp...!" spluttered the bug and got rum (flavor) down the wrong pipe. "Howzatagin?... Magic?!"

"Why, sure. I figure the, at least, *combined* magic of our leading Oz practitioners ought to be able to bring it off, sizeable as it is."

"Well, but—" objected the professor, "if *magic's* going to do the whole thing, why even bother planning the layout of the mechanism? Just let magic do it from scratch!"

"Oh, but that's what it couldn't you know... At least, I don't think..."

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Now neither of these savants, though residing in the magical land, was in himself a magic-worker. The difference, however, was that Prof. Wogglebug had never even thought of himself in the role of one bringing off magic tricks, but young Henk had given a deal of thought to the nature of magic.

"I've read up a little," he now revealed, "on the history of wonder-working. Incidentally, those references are not in the New Wing, but, as is clear from acquisition dates, were already to be found in the old pre-Boston holdings. Funnily enough, there wasn't all that much about the philosophy of magic in the books you brought from the States!"

Prof. Wogglebug accepted the pleasantries for what it was worth and his pupil went on; "In every account of incidents involving actual magic spells, I found that a charm or an incantation brought off exactly what was specified, never more nor less—"

"That's all to the good, wouldn't it be?" asked the Wogglebug. "I mean it shows that magic's an exact non-science."

"Let me illustrate what I mean; if, say, a given spell is worded; 'Let there be a dog on this table in front of us', that's exactly what you'd get, neither less nor more. I mean it would be a dog with no distinguishing characteristics; as near an ideal 'average' dog as you could get—and incidentally of a size to suit the receptacle where it was wished to. On a plain 'unspecified' wish like that you wouldn't get a Great Dane or a Chihuahua, nor yet a dog with very long-hair or no hair, nor having any other out-of-the-average specifications."

"And yet," the professor hemmed still further, "you *could* get an unusual dog, if the magic was at all efficacious. A green dog, for instance, or - or, say, a dog with a tail ten feet long - or, well, anything you cared to specify."

"Exactly!" crowed Henk. "Anything you *specified*! That's just the conclusion I came to. Magic delivers what you specify, but *only* what you specify. After all, magic is a force of nature—or maybe 'unnature', but the possibilities would be the same; nature can't plan, nature can only let happen... what

comes naturally.”

“Oh, come,” said the Wogglebug, who, curiously enough, had never worked his way through this particular line of logic before. “Nature can bring about the most complicated structures.”

“But not by planning or thinking. Everything in nature happens because natural laws couldn’t allow anything else to happen.”

“What about snow-flakes?: intricate, perfect, and no two alike.”

“An excellent example, sir!” rejoiced the youth. “The inevitable result of natural forces—and impossible to plan.”

“Hm,” sighed the bug, about to be convinced. “And then?”

Magic can’t ‘plan’. There’s no mind there to figure anything out. It can only materialize what has been suggested to it. When it comes to an installation that is supposed to span all Oz and purify the air for a million people; well..! It’s better to be prepared with a blueprint, I think, to which one can point and says ‘Make that reality! Hey presto, changeo!’”

C H A P T E R T E N

"Magic," the Emperor had said.

"Yes, what did you mean exactly?" said Princess Dorothy, where she sat on the edge of Nick Chopper's bed. She crossed her knees, then pulled down her hem modestly. "Why, just what I said," replied the Woodman, looking at his friend with a little mild astonishment.

"But *magic*—gout in the world?" It was the princess' turn to look more astonished yet. "It just doesn't work, dear. *You* know that... At least, in more than one or two isolated and questionable cases..." Even in Dorothy's own experience there had been those one or two incidents taking place in the world outside Oz which she had never wholly been able to explain away as something non-supernatural.

"Oh, no," the tin man retorted. "I *don't* know that. Indeed, it's just exactly my own experiences in America, the recollection of which convinces me that magic can work there and maybe now could be useful again."

"You mean...?"

"Yes, my queer adventures in the United States—and the equally remarkable ones of the straw man—in 1904. I wasn't just imagining them; I did go there? and in my own tin shape? "

"So Mr. Baum says," admitted Dorothy.

“And he never tells a fib.” That point at least was gospel. “So then; if I, magically alive as a man of tin, could walk and talk in America and do everything including live, why wouldn’t other forms of magic work? and if one form would work, why not all forms? Great-world industry might then be powered by magic! and in one stroke all sources of pollution would become redundant and could be done away with.”

“Whew! “ said Princess Dorothy. “That’s a tall order. Have you thought that all over carefully, Nick?” The Princess, herself a Ph.D., herself took a moment to think it over. Then she said, “Granted that something might be done to *power* industry by magic—and thus do away with the need for fossil-fuel-burning and atom-smashing, and the resultant pollution—have you considered that a great deal of the *product* of industry is also pollutant? I’m thinking of the unwanted *bi*-products of manufacture, which are disposed of via air and water and do so much to threaten life. You couldn’t get rid of those without getting rid of the industries themselves, and that the outer-worlders would of course never allow.”

“Oh, darn, Dorothy,” mourned the Tin Woodman, depressed, “now you’ve punctured my beautiful dreams.” He turned his face to the wall and repined. Dorothy waited - sympathetically, of course. She knew Nick wasn’t going to give up *that* easily the wheels he’d set in motion. Presently indeed he went on; “No! Dorothy. Now mark this well; magic *can* save the world, even if, in the end, the magic has to be performed here in Oz.”

“Gracious “ said the princess, really caring. “That’s wonderful news, and most reassuring. Do you mind telling me what it is you’re suggesting?”

But Nick wasn’t going to give over his last-ditch resource of magic to the possible scoffing of his devoted friend. He *had* to have something to believe in; we all do (even if it is something totally unreal like the possibility of the betterment of human nature). He was going to hang onto his hope and dream ‘til the last possible moment.

Since so much was going to happen on down the road that

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would obviate the trying out (at least within the time scope of this book) of what Nick Chopper had in mind, it may be as well to inform the reader, who may come to suspect an unhappy ending, of the nature of the tin man's visionary scheme. It was simply that if/when all else broke down Oz adepts of magic would fan out over the world and, instead of changing *things* by magic, change minds so that humans gave up the drive to engulf the planet in unnecessary population and the wish to have the products of pollutant industry. It will at once be seen how *very* visionary such a notion was.

For the nonce, the Woodman said, "It's air pollution that is chiefly bothering Oz. When you come right down to it, that *all* comes from the burning of substances to produce energy. Suppose you were to cut all that out and never burned another lump of coal or drop of oil — *or* smashed an atom (to provide us all with fall-out) ...?"

"Industry would screech to a halt in a moment," declared Dorothy.

"And yet there's one source of energy that burns day and night, and has done so forever, and bothers nobody..."

"The sun!

"Yes. Or even the moon. Think of the incredible power of that dead world whose mere gravity force can pull the incalculable weight of the earth's oceans about. Do you mean to say that that energy can't power a few Earth industries if properly harnessed? Not to speak of what sun energy could do. And I think magic can help in finding the means to do the harnessing!"

"How thrilling," exclaimed Dorothy, catching fire a little. "If only one knew how!"

"Yes," said Nick, and paused. "If only *you* knew how, indeed. Because, dear Dorothy, I want you to be the one to head up the mission to the great world!"

Mrs. Choggolak was flabbergasted.

When the others had gone home after the centenary celebrations, she had just stayed behind in Winkiezia thinking to

comfort her old and ailing friend. She'd heard of the convocation of woodmen but, taken up with her own little preoccupations (mostly indoor ones, so she wasn't all that bothered by the thin grey haze that hung over Oz most of the time now), she hadn't really paid much attention. Now she fluttered a bit.

"Me? your imperiality!" said she. "Whatever—Why, I don't know the least—Why, I don't even—" (She was going to say 'care' but realized in time it would hardly do in one of her lofty rank, presumed to have the well-being of the commonalty at heart at all times. She changed it to:) "know where to begin to try to get an understanding of the problem."

"You don't need to, dear Dorothy," said the Tin Woodman. "A suffering creature in a trap" (the tender-hearted Woodman knew all about such) "doesn't have to know the workings of the gin to want out—and to protest. 'That's all we want you to do. But you see, your prominence in Oz affairs and your fame in America will open doors that otherwise might stay shut to the unaccompanied woodmen. Don't forget: your picture has been on U.S. postage stamps.

"Oh, yes," said Princess Dot and blushed modestly. "You mean the set of twelve issued on the 140th anniversary of Mr. Baum's birth. But it wasn't really good of me. That tacky hair-do! No one would recognize me."

"Never mind. Sorceress Glinda can do over your appearance when—that is: if—you agree to take the part of roving ambassador. You can look just like Judy Garland in the film. Then you can be sure you'll be recognized."

"Oh Judy," sniffed Dorothy. "She was too old—" then stopped with a gasp to realize that it was to Miss Garland's developed sixteen that she, Dorothy, had by now allowed herself to advance in apparent age. After all, it would be ridiculous to appear any younger when one had a son teaching at the university.

"You'll go then?" said Nick Chopper, smiling—well, not slyly.

"I didn't say that."

"But you will?"

"Yes."

C H A P T E R

E L E V E N

Everybody (who was anybody) was assembled in the Banqueting Hall of the Palace of Magic in the Emerald City. This might very well be considered the most important day in the history of the fairyland. For the first time Oz wasn't going to just BE something but would DO something, and that no less a thing than to save the world (from itself).

A large contingent of the Careleaver Kids was there, casting their fragrance on the dessert air (a regulation banquet had just been served for all participants. Ozma didn't think it was quite the thing for the delegation to arrive in America with empty stomachs.) Fweetie and Thyugar were present, dripping over everyone. Some people thought *they* were the dessert and tried to eat them but got a sharp rebuff. Kaggi-Karr was making rather a production of her participation and bragging, in small private asides, that it was in fact she who had finally got this show on the road. All the usual Oz celebrities were at the scene, all except the Tin Woodman. He was just *too* frail to be able to stand any further transplantations from his own sick-room.

Close to Princess Ozma at the head table was Queen Glinda, the master planner. To her went all credit for the delicate diplomacy that had led up to the arrangements for the woodmen's tour. The sorceress was feeling especially bucked because word

had just come that the Honorable Nigel Ndunkrumbwa, prime minister of the United Kingdom, had agreed to receive the delegation - or such members of it as would be able to take time out from appearing at a round of children's festivals the world over. Glinda had heard via the grapevine that the News of the World and the Sunday Observer already had headlines to the effect that "Queen to see Snow White, Dwarfs at Buck House", and she whispered as much to Princess Dorothy and the ten-man party who sat down the table to right and left of herself and the Girl Ruler.

That ruler tapped her glass and silence fell immediately. "This is the darkest day in the history of our land," quoth Ozma. Well, it was December 22 but it wasn't all *that* dark; but Ozma was speaking semi-allegorically. "The clouds (of carbide gas) that lowered upon our house, and realm, have grown imperceptibly but steadily worse, every day for many years. From tomorrow they will grow lighter—because our friends are going out into the world to tell the people there is a better way—"

Cheers! And hats (indoors!) were tossed into the air. The enthusiasm was intense. When Dr. Dorothy Choggolak, Bûcheron Arbrisseau, Waldo Baumschneider, Coupeur du Bois, Albero Boscaiolo, Arbol Cortador, Woody Hackett, Tajar Madera, Forrest Sawyer, Legno Tagliabosco, and Skog Vedhuggar had taken bows, Ozma went on. But the woodmen, or for that matter their little lady leader, weren't listening. The briefing sessions of the last weeks, nay months had been too grueling and those that weren't falling asleep were trembling in their boots. Would they be able to bring it off? At the best they were, all of them, unwilling converts to the cause. It was only patriotism, love of fatherland, that drove them on. They *wanted* to succeed, but could they? They felt such neophytes. Even Princess Dr. Dorothy, after a century of public appearances, was wondering if she had the aplomb. But then the princess stiffened her lip. Why, that queen wasn't even born when she, Dorothy, was already a princess in Oz!

The Kansas princess and the woodmen weren't the only ones

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who were feeling qualms. Witch Glinda was too. In actual fact, it was why she herself was not going along on the expedition. She had at first, in the general enthusiasm, bought the idea that Oz magic could solve all the great world's pollution problems. Then one day she was suddenly brought up short by the thought; What if it couldn't?!

Hastily she went over in her mind a long list of magical things that had happened (reputable novelists said so) out in the world beyond Fairyland: the frequently cited visits, with complete viability, of the Scarecrow, Tin Woodman, Wogglebug, and other Ozites in the United States; the functioning of Peter Delphia's (and her own Button Bright's) magic umbrella; the same of Mary Poppins' parrot-headed one; the awesome behavior life of E. Nesbit's "It"; the coming to life of the "Old Magic" of Wales; the performances of Mrs Whatsit, Mrs Who, and Mrs Which; the magic-making book of young Bastian; the impossible but undoubted true return of Merlin to save England; the doings of Pinocchio; and the strange journey of the children with Miss Price, who surely became a bona fide working, witch.

The capability of magic in non-magical settings could not be doubted (at least as far as children were the witnesses!). But what about adults? It was they who were doing the polluting and would have to be converted. Now if she herself were along and the dictator of Bulgoslavia said, 'Okay, Glinda old girl, show us! Replace that factory's bituminous-burning with magic energy!', would she be able to bring it off?

If not, it certainly wouldn't be for lack of trying. Ever since the Careleaver Kids had arrived (by now more than two months ago) with their urgent plea that something be done, she had been practising every day: not just powering power plants by magic but first having to build them from scratch by the same process. For that she'd had to call in Prof. Wogglebug and he in turn had called in Docent Henkomankatogale (hastily graduated and given his own laboratory in which to perfect his engineering skills). The docent, using procedures available, since the Rosenbergs, from the reference works in all well-ordered

libraries, had, in three weeks, produced drafts for a fully functional atomy-smashing complex. (Plenty of the minute, magic-packed creatures had been found willing to sacrifice themselves for the general good; being magic and Ozian they didn't really 'die' anyway, just disintegrated.)

With Henk's plans to read from, Glinda found it simple to waft into being high-powered energy installations—and then waft them as quickly out again, ugly things! But *could* she, when it came to the crunch, do it in the outer world? She daren't risk it. Better to send off the delegation quite without any magic know-how of their own, just primed to make the plea for trying magic, not actually attempting to pull off prestidigitations on their own.

But now at the banquet table she waffled. Was anyone going to pay any attention if the ambassadors couldn't prove their claims? Well, they could but try.

Now Ozma was tapping her glass again. The big moment had arrived. Acting in concert, she, Sorceress Glinda, the Wizards Oz and Wam, Good Witch Diane (ex-Tattypoo), and other accredited adepts were going to wave their wands, scepters, spark-plugs, or whatever, and wish the travelers to the main gate of Disneyuniverse at Smith Center, Kansas (the center not only of Smiths but of the lower-continental United States, as well as of the world, of course—though, curiously, not of Kansas). The Queen of the Quadlings had been instrumental in choosing that venue for the delegation's reception in the great world, rather than, say, Ozworld outside Chittenango, New York. After all, was she not a "Mrs. Smith" herself?

The ten woodmen took tearful leave of their wives, children, and other collaterals who had followed them to the Ruby City from all corners of Oz and established themselves in temporary lodgings while the men were undergoing their indoctrination course. Now they'd all come along to the Emerald City for blast-off day, before returning to the own several homes.

Ambassador Choggolak hastily kissed her parents, aunts and uncles, husband (only one) and son. To the latter she said, "Wish

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me luck, darling. Meanwhile, don't forget how to build protecto-domes. We may need them yet!"

So saying, she stepped to the cleared place before the Queen's seat at the banquet board and joined hands with Waldo and Tajar.

The instruments of enchantment were lifted high, they moved in mazy magic motion, and there was a crashing... silence—as the envoys vanished from sight.

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

In the end, rather than look grotesque in a pokey poke bonnet and a gingham skirt that would have stood out above her (apparently) sixteen-year-old knees like a tutu, Dorothy had chosen to resemble Judy Garland as in her film role in *The Wizard of Oz*. As a result there was an instant deafening round of applause under the great reception dome (by now they'd perfected the same sort of installation - on a smaller scale - in the world ex-Oz as well) where the tens of thousands waited to welcome the travelers. Some of the older fans close up started screaming "Give us 'Over the Rainbow', Judy! PLEEEZE..!"

Dorothy was prepared for an ovation but even so the general fervor made her blink and start back. The ten woodmen were behind her, however, so she didn't get far. In a moment she had to turn and face the music. This was provided by the ninety-piece orchestra, which had struck up a medley of 'Ding-Dong, the Witch Is Dead', 'Get Happy', and 'The Man that Got Away'. The princess cleared her throat and waited for her downbeat. Then, to the surprise of the multitude, she started *talking*.

"My friends," she said. Then a midget, got up in the costume of a Hollywood Munchkin, stepped forward and presented her with a bouquet and sang:

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“As Mayor of the Munchkin City
I thought it would be a pity
If you didn’t get a bouquet
As a nice little way to say;
We welcome you to Munchkin Land! “

Dorothy smiled and was about to continue her speech when three little girls rushed forward with further bouquets, thrust them in her hands, stood back, and began to squeak: “We represent—” then burst into tears. Their mothers, costumed as suburban housewives and standing in the front row of welcomers, now ran forward, clasped the wailing infants to them, and in a squatting position continued the welcome:

“We represent the *kindergartens*—
And, incident’ly, the Boy Scout dens—
As well as the leading womens’ and mens’
Societies to greet these ten salvation friends
in Munchkin Land!”

With that the mothers with gentle wallops sent the tots back to the ranks and turned to grab the bouquets out of Dorothy’s hands and distribute them among the gaping woodmen.

Next three little boys made up as midgets swaggered forward and recited:

“We represent the Vic Tanney gyms,
The Vic Tanney gyms,
the Vic Tanney gyms” (in these days it was considered very good form to insert paid commercial announcements wherever possible)

“—And in the name of aforesaid gyms
We welcome you to
Munchkin Land! “

Then they passed out bouquets to whoever of the new arrivals didn’t have any, which by this time included Dorothy.

The newcomers were most gratified and lifted their nosegays to sniff them but left off, finding them, though gorgeous, to be without scent. Then Princess Dorothy began: “My friends—” At this moment the entire ensemble broke into “We’re Off to

See the Wizard", and the mayor of the Munchkin City grabbed Dorothy's arm to hustle her through the turnstile. A widely smiling young lady made up as Minnie Mouse handed the ambadress a ticket printed "\$80" and over stamped "Complimentary", and the Oz girl was in! and had the freedom of Disney universe.

It was assumed she would want first to see the Emerald City, which had been reconstructed entire in the vast amusement park, exactly conforming to the plans of the original Oz metropolis, only better. Where the older city's walls were decorated with mere emeralds, its imitation had huge glass baubles with laser lights inside which cast a green brilliance undreamed of in the real E.C.

With the woodmen in tow, each with accompanying starlet hanging on his arm, and a cast of thousands streaming behind, the Major rushed Dorothy through the streets of the city. The princess just had time to recognize the street corner (marked by a plaque) where she had met Carter Green in the adventure of *The Vegetable Man of Oz* before she was in the reproduction of Ozma's 60/ Palace of Magic and in minutes stood before the banquet table she had just left, other minutes before.

A most convincing, robot of Princess Ozma rose and extended plastic arms to Dorothy, saying, "My dear! how lovely to see you! Please draw near and let me greet you with a kiss."

Dorothy, in the suddenness of it all, could not help gasping, "Ozma! You here? But I thought—I..."

"My dear! " replied the pseudo Ozma. "How lovely to see you! Please draw near—"

"Oh, I see," said Dorothy. "Of course you're not really—"

"My dear!" cried Ozma. "How lovely—"

The visitor turned away, biting her lip and fighting back a tear. But the mayor thought everything was going splendidly. "If you're ready, Miss Garland... The Mayor—I should say, the *other* Mayor—of Smith Center—is waiting to greet you. That'll be outside on the lawn, beside Lake Quad—"

"Good heavens," breathed the girl. "Is that here too?" Again

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she could not help recalling a memory: the fun and frolics of *The Green Dolphin of Oz*.

“Oh, yes, the entire City and nearer suburbs,” assured the Munchkin mayor and beamed with satisfaction. “There’s to be a motorcade and a reception at the Silo Hotel by the Governor. Incidentally, you’ll be staying at the Silo—gracious me! where’s your luggage?! That should have been sent on ahead...”

“Actually, we didn’t bring any,” confessed the newcomer with just a trace of confusion. “We thought we’d pick up a few things on the way...”

“Very wise!” praised the Munchkin, and made a note on his cuff. Dorothy had a sudden vision of the sets of matched suitcases she and her companions would probably receive at their next stop. You couldn’t fault Americans’ flashy generosity.

As the couple emerged on the lawn Dorothy had a glimpse far off of Legno Tagliabosco and Skog Vedhuggar being shoved into gondolas on the lake by their pretty companions. She didn’t know where the other eight men had got to.

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

“No, really; this won’t do at all,” said Benny Fishel (Art’s brother).

“What won’t?” replied Thyugar.

“The air! Your house is all black. We hardly recognized it now. And it’s only been—how many months?—since we were here before. I can’t believe how filthy the air is!”

“Wasn’t that just what I was saying at breakfast, sweetings?” said Fweetie. The twins ate great servings of salt pie and vinegar trifle, but nothing seemed to help; they still remained the sweetest things.

“I guess you were,” admitted Thyug. “But what can we do?”

“Send for Henkomenkatogale,” supplied Ida Lyze. “It’s all over Oz: he’s perfected what they call ‘filter domes’, and I’ll bet he’d be tickled to try one out here. Surely he couldn’t find a more deserving example of a depressed area due to air pollution.”

“Don’t forget it’s partly the fault of that volcano next hill over,” reminded Thyugar. A sudden thought struck her; “Oh, I say, we wouldn’t have to include that under our dome, would we?”

The form of her question indicated that assent had virtually been given for the measure. There were fourteen of the Care-leaver Kids in this detachment. They’d grown so fond of hoboing

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in the foregoing months that they couldn't quit, but now they settled down temporarily with the Stickies to watch the progress of construction.

Henk was delighted when the summons came. Even Dr. Em. Wogglebug took a short leave of absence and accompanied him when he traveled south. This would be the first substantial all-weather dome to be erected in Oz by traditional engineering methods. Making up blue-prints in minute detail was all very well but after a while you wanted to see the thing in physical there-ness.

"Too bad neither of us has any magic," sighed the bug as they tootled along the highway in the scalawagon-with-trailer-cart.

"How so?" said Henk.

"If we had a wishing ring or a magic wand, we could have it do a scan of the plans and raise the structure in a twinkling, without the labor of actual physical tectonics."

"Oh, but that's just what I like," protested the younger savant. "Like; it's more fun to bake a cake from scratch than just stir up a mix."

"Mmm—well, if you say so," said the Wogglebug, who was always stronger on theoretics than on actual carrying-out.

When Thyugar and Fweetie had oozed down to the bottom of their hillock to greet the arrivals they were as black as their house from the inches-deep layer of grit and grime that lay over the landscape. The admixture of solids gave undeniably, however, more purchase to their handshakes.

"Hm," said Henk, employing a handful of lint to clean up after the courtesies, and seeing a way he might save the twins from their environment and themselves. "Are you completely—er, suited with yourselves? as you are, I mean.."

"Oh, *yes*," assured Fweetie. "Everything was so *sweet*—'til this rain of terror began. Now we don't dare stir out of a door or *this* happens," and he surveyed ruefully what was left of his hand; the rest of it had come away on Henk's.

"I might," ventured the docent, "be able to come up with

something...; a flexible outer shell that would reproduce your features precisely and allow you a bit more mobility than at present?"

"*Would* you?" cried Thyugar all afire. "But," she paused, "would *we*?—want it, that is. No, actually I don't think we would. What about it, Fweets? Do we want after all to do away with that which makes us most ourselves, our overwhelming syrupiness? It would be like bobbing the lion's mane, filing his feeth, and clipping his claws: dispensing with everything that's most daunting about him. What you had left wouldn't be a lion any more."

"No, I think you're right, Thyug " seconded Fweetie, as they slurped stickily up the slope. "Anyway, that would be compromising with the awfulness: this siege of pollution, I mean, and thus in a sense accepting it—rather than fighting it on all fronts.

Once we begin institutionalizing it and living around it we're half way toward making it part of our normal lives. Then we'd never get rid of it."

The two scientists were surprised the Twins could reason so cogently. They gained a new respect for them and went to work with a better will than ever to provide them with an enclosed ambience where they could carry on living their unique lives undisturbed.

The work of construction didn't take long. The engineering profs 'hired' a crew of laborers from among the nearby Quadlings: bright fellows—and girls too, of course, since Lib had swept over Oz. For two weeks the Careleaver Kids stood around watching the ever-diminishing concentric rings of plexiglass rise. Then one day Belle E. Coase said, startled, "Why, it's exactly like a regular Oz hous! only vast—and see-through."

"And with multiple 'faces' and them squeezed right down at the bottom," added Rock Oko in an aside. "Here you don't get the visual impression of half a head poking out of the ground, as with a normal house."

"Right," laughed Docent Henk. He happened to be taking

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a breather near a group of the Kids at the moment. "This dome's a perfect half sphere. We thought we'd try that here where the topography is somewhat but not too much 'accidental'. If we do bigger air domes later on," he went on, scratching the ear of Aloysius the cat (he liked to hang around where the action was), "they'll be shallower on level ground or more eggshaped—over hills."

Suddenly little Cathy Turr gave a scream. "A bigger air-dome?! Oh, glory, yes. *Yess!!* ... Oh, please, Mr. Henk—" and the forgetmenot shrub collapsed in a suppliant heap in front of Henkomankatogale. "Will you not build a dome of delivery over our own, our only, our beloved *Charmed Garden of Oz?!*"

Before he could say yea or nay she implored on; "Then we can go home again! and not be afraid—afraid that sooty destruction will dog us at our heels, afraid when we fold our petals at dark that there may not be a new day to open them to—or, if there is, our leaves will be all gummy-stuck-together so we can't—"

"Please! " yelped Henk merrily, "hold a pause! so I can say Yes! Or... well, let me ask my colleagues. What do you think, Ms Jinjur?"

The tiny shrieks of the Careleaver Kids had attracted the attention of others of the construction crew and they drew near. Among them was a dark-haired lass with a commanding air who had rapidly established herself as Henkomankatogale's second-in-command. He'd got so he deferred to her in everything.

"Sounds all right to me," Jinjur admitted, pushing back her hard hat and thumbing a dope stick into the corner of her mouth. The misnamed, entirely non-habit-forming flavored 'suck sticks' were widely used in Oz, particularly among the working populace though Queen Glinda herself sometimes enjoyed a suck. "We'd want to branch out into something on a bigger scale soon in any case, wouldn't we?"

This was the first Henk had heard that the Quadling girl

(or, let's face it, young woman) was going to be associated with him on more than one construction job. Somehow, he found he didn't mind at all. But then, when you have commanded an army of women, corralling one man is nothing.

C H A P T E R F O U R T E E N

After the send-off banquet Kaggi-Karr felt a bit flat. Of course she'd picked up plenty of glory on that occasion. That was why she didn't go back to her alternate-universe Magic Land as she'd originally intended. It was a *long* time since she'd enjoyed this much glory over there.

But glory is a commodity that doesn't keep. After all the banquet-goers who had thrilled to the ringing of her praises had gone home, where was her glory then? She might have mobilized never so many armies of opinion; when the citadel was taken and the armies dispersed, where were you?

Disconsolate, she flew out of the palace window and perched on a wintry fence, all ruffled up like any old crow. She shuddered just a bit.

Then she noticed another bird sitting on the fence a few yards along. It was the Round Robin. "Oh, it's you," said Kaggi-Karr. "What doing?" It occurred to her that the bird looked as cheesed off as herself.

"Nothing much," said the robin. "Since the Big Petition, there hasn't been that much going on."

"No use for you any more, ey?" said the crow. "They get what they want out of you, then cast you aside like an old shoe."

"I guess it's like that," conceded the robin.

After that a silence fell. The wind shifted a little, blew some blackened leaves into a new arrangement in a corner of the fence, and both birds turned around on their perch.

"You know what, R.R.? .." said Kaggi. "Let's get out of this. That is: unless you're dated up?"

"No date," said R.R. "Where to?"

"I thought we'd fly over and see the Tin Woodman. I hear he's in worse shape than we are."

"Yeah. That's how-come he missed the send-off, you know."

"Yes, I know. And I missed *him*. Funny thing; I went to his centenary celebration with the contingent from E.C. here—but he didn't know me!"

"How do you mean?"

"I knew HIM all right. Okay, he's made out of iron in the alternate world but he looks pretty much the same as here. But he didn't know me from old Jackie Daw; she was there too."

"Why should he?" asked the robin, puzzled. "You know both universes but our Nick Chopper has never been out of this one."

"Yeah, I guess so," grumbled the crow. "Still, it was disappointing. After all I've done for that gink—in another universe."

"Like that?"

"Why, I've flown back and forth between Oz and the States so many times, rescuing him and Scarekickers there, that I can't count them." Kaggi-Karr paused. "Say, that's an idea."

"What is?"

"Are you on? Let's go then I want to go see if that tower is here—in this version of Oz; the one those two were always getting imprisoned in. It should be right on the way."

That was enough to launch the two birds into flight. A scant seven minutes brought them to the farther western outskirts of the Emerald City—or Veridian City, as it was ironically being called these days, now it was eighty shades darker (but the term was catching on in the folk mouth, an ominous sign).

No tower. "Oh, well, what would you expect? in *this* queer off-brand Oz," squawked Kaggi-Karr resignedly.

"Wudda ya mean?" returned the Round Robin indignantly.

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"This is the *original* Oz. Accept no substitutes! *This* is the norm. Those other Ozzes are just perversions of this one." The bird seemed genuinely hot under the collar. "It reminds me of something I've heard about science nitpickers who claim our moon isn't actually a moon; it's a 'companion planet'. Of course!! it's 'the moon'! It's the original moon. That's what we call that kind of thing in our night sky, *whatever* it may be. It's those marbles rolling around the other planets that aren't 'moons'. Call *them* something else!"

"Souse *me!*" said Kaggi, moving her respect for the robin up several notches. "Never mind. Come on!" And she headed out over Winkie territory.

Not for long though. They had not flown half an hour when the crow slowed down and began to lose altitude, fluttering in wide circles. "What's the matter?" yelled the robin.

"I don't get it!" gasped the other. "The Winkie country is supposed to be yellow! I'm sure that's what I was told. Admittedly; in—er, that other Oz it's violet. I've got to turn back! I've got to let Ozma know. We must tell Ozma. We must tell the Queen!"

"Tell her what?" asked the Round Robin laconically. He had checked in his flight as well and followed the crow.

"That she's got a new country in Oz, a brown one! "Something seemed to give the bird additional food for thought. "There's never been a brown country in Oz before. How interesting..."

"There still isn't," the robin dashed her fantasy. "Actually it's more of a burnt umber but it's the same old Winkie country, just crudded over pretty badly with this pollution. Anyway, I thought you'd been here before. You said you visited the Woodman."

"That's right. I merely got wished there, along with Ozma's party from E.C. And back again afterwards. I haven't been out and traveled in Winkie-land before; just in the South."

"It's the same deal there," informed the native bird. "Maybe a few degrees less blackened. You must have seen—"

"That the whole thing's maroon? Yes, but in the alternate Oz

the southern country's pink. I just thought something had been lost in translation."

"You might as well know," humped the robin. "The Munchkins are indigo, by now, if not outright navy; the little orange country has gone dark chestnut—but in fact you can hardly tell it by color from Quadlinga—while Gillikinland, let's face it, is black."

"Oh, dear, oh, dear," sighed Kaggi. "This *is* worse than the Yellow Fog... Well, come on."

Then it was bye-bye, black bird, as she flapped on, as the crow flies, into the west.

C H A P T E R

F I F T E E N

“Oh, but we mustn’t be separated!” cried Dorothy in alarm.

“It’s all right, dear,” shushed Mrs. Tubbs, who had been assigned by the studio as wardrobe mistress, make-up maid, and chaperon to the young girl. There mustn’t be a breath of scandal in connection with her triumphal world tour.

“But the woodmen and I belong together!” Dorothy continued to protest, “in—er, the never-never land and into tomorrow,” as if that clinched it.

“The gossip columnists are beginning to talk,” warned Mrs. T. “They feel it isn’t quite the thing for a young lady to be constantly surrounded by ten husky lumberjacks—and nobody else. So you’re to have your own press secretary, lady’s maid, chauffeur, and bodyguard—and of course do your own tour.”

“Oh, no, wait!” cried Dorothy, nova almost in panic as she saw the bus door close behind Forrest Sawyer and the vehicle start off. “We were to have seen the President today! I thought we were to board the plane right now.”

“That’s all been changed,” said the chaperon smoothly. “Mr. Koxden’s had to fly to Baghdad at the last minute. Instead, Miss Koxden, his daughter, is meeting us in New York and you’ll do a tour of the shops.”

“But what about my speech? I was supposed to address

Congress—”

“They feel the time isn’t right. What with the Moslem War entering a new stage and the Russians as stubborn as ever—”

“Oh, good heavens, that war’s been at a standstill for two years,” said the ambassador impatiently. In all the hours she’d spent kicking her heels in hotel suites she’d been able to get through five months’ worth of *Newstime* from cover to cover. “The black-in’s so deep the opposing lines haven’t been able to see each other since Christmas last year.”

“Never mind, my dear. I’m afraid, for the time being, this is the way it has to be.” Dorothy sulked and was silent all the way to New York. Within her, resentment was reaching a danger point.

The woodmen’s bus, meanwhile, proved to be merely a shuttle. Runway 4 was shut down due to oil slick. There had been a minor disaster; a private plane had collided with a helicopter on take-off and both aircraft had spilled their bowels over the flight path. The bus taxied the men to runway 1, where a jet was waiting to take them to Tokyo.

Inside the cabin all was confusion. “What?” yelled Tajar, “Tokyo?! What are we supposed to do there?”

“Shh,” said Forrest, who by now had gained some ascendancy as tacit leader of the group, “the Emperor’s expressed a wish to see us. He’s ninety-eight and they try to satisfy his every whim. It seems he’s read all the Oz books and is a regular fan. We might actually get to converse with him.”

“Yeah?” came back Tajar belligerently. “And what’ll we say to him? Dorothy’s our spokeswoman. We haven’t got a clue.”

“Dry up, okay? I’m working on it” — and Forrest licked his pencil and got busy on the back of the lunch menu.

But at the Aleutians bad news was waiting for them. The Supreme Soviet suddenly revoked the terms of the Seward treaty of 1867, claiming that it had been underwritten by an Imperial government, whose engagements were today so little binding that it was as if they had never been. Ergo, Alaska remained Russian territory and the woodmen’s B-81 had violated Soviet

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airspace by landing there.

There was panic at Attu! In the confusion four of the woodmen were ordered aboard a private GeeBee Sportster commandeered by the government, which made it across into the Yukon before soft-crashing.

The other six were herded back aboard their original aircraft, which, crammed with government officials, reporters, and members of the Harlem Globetrotters, was the last flight out before radio contact with the disputed region was temporarily closed down. It headed, not for Tokyo nor yet Hawaii or California, but the Air Force Base at Lapu-Lapu City in the Philippines.

At the Lord Poe-Hoycant in New York Dorothy said, "But, Najeeb, where am I going to put them all?" It was traditional, in view of their background, for all members of the President's immediate family to have Arab given names.

"Don't you *like* pretty things?" said Ms Koxden, a bit piqued.

"Oh, I adore them! But I already have five trunkfuls - and no way to get them back to Oz. It's not why I really came here!" Miss Najeeb smiled a bit sceptically. "'Oz'? But surely that is just a promotional gimmick - for your next film. *The Return of the Wizard of Oz*?"

"Ms Koxden," said Judy — I mean, Dorothy — in formal tones. "Do you really not know who I am? Mrs. Deans has been dead for thirty years. If there's to be a new Oz film it's nothing to do with me. Our mission was simply capitalized on for publicity by the film people. I'm here to try to

help solve the world pollution problem. But we can't get anyone to listen to us."

"How fascinating," breathed the president's daughter. "Then you mean Oz really exists. Wait till Dad hears this! He'll be thrilled."

"He already knows! I've told you; we had an appointment to see him earlier this week. Then everything was changed."

"Oh, but that's silly. Daddy'll love to have a talk with you about Ozma and the Cowardly Lion and the Patchwork Girl and all those famous figures. What if we go see him?! Would you

like that?"

Dorothy sighed, then smiled brilliantly. Perhaps Miss Koxden was merely as dense as she was sweet.

The president's daughter went to the phone, dialed, was shunted through several operators—and presently returned to say, "There, I knew it! Daddy's thrilled to bits. He says he'd never miss the chance to talk to Glinda of Oz!"

"Who?" stuttered Dorothy.

"Glinda. I told him I had this pretty young woman with me from a place called Oz and he knew right away who you were! Isn't he a clever old daddy? We're to fly out to Riyadh this afternoon. Isn't this smog awful? The black-in from the burning oil fields was so bad they couldn't see each other across the conference table so they moved the talks out to the desert.

Wouldn't you think they'd confer about what to do about the bad air?!"

Princess Dorothy shrugged, raised her eyebrows in a combined gesture of bemusement and resignation, and waited to see what would happen.

C H A P T E R

S I X T E E N

They had reinstated the charming old custom of propping a fir tree up on the topmost point of a new building as soon as the ridge-pole was in place. In the case of air-filter domes, this ceremonial moment came when the ten-pointed star shape of the final cap-plate was fitted in. The lop-ended tree stalk, secured by guy wires, wobbled a bit in the gritty light wind, then fell over and lay on its side. But the tradition had been enacted.

Inside the dome, five hundred feet down on ground level, the excitement was intense. Ozma herself was there! and away from her feet in every direction radiated the ranks of cheering flowers, all faces turned toward the beaming young queen. It was really a toss-up which was lovelier, the Girl Ruler of All Oz or the legions of anemones, bluebells, cowslips, dandelions, eglantines, freesias, gladioli, hollihocks, irises, japonicas, king-cups, lupins, marigolds, narcissus, orchids, pansies, quince-blossoms, rhododendrons, sunflowers, tulips, umbrella plants, violets, wistaria, xylocarps, yarrows, and zinnias that thronged round her.

In the nine weeks that construction had been under way and as the roomy air enclosure grew steadily more shielded, the fa-

§ See the volume of the same name. Editor's note.

mous Charmed Garden of Oz^s had had time to regain much of its former splendor. Already all mere accumulations of dark soot and grime had been cleansed away and even some of the smaller of the great blackened barren patches of ground had begun to lose their grim dead aspect. Of course your individual small plants, feet enclosed in the revived soil and heads raised in the ever more crystalline-clear air, needed no more than a day or two to spring back to robust beauty.

The garden had become a greenhouse, admittedly, but plants have never been heard to complain of living in a greenhouse. They may miss the rain and the breeze; on the other hand, freedom from freezing and drought is delightful to them—not to mention, in the present instance, release from being smothered in filth. “Speech!” cried the nearer ranks of the Careleaver Kids, and the flowers in their multitudes took up the cry. Of course ALL the plants in the great garden couldn’t talk, but enough of them could to make a difference.

“Speeches are tedious,” observed Princess Ozma, “but let me just say this; The endoming of selected areas in Oz has been so successful that we are enlarging the program.

We had hoped—too sanguinely, we see now—that long before this our roving ambassadors would have sent word that negotiations were in hand which eventually would obviate any wide-spread need of air-enclosure in this country, but, alas, such visions seem as far off as ever. Master Engineer Henkomankatogale starts work next week on the enclosing of the palace and grounds of the Emperor of the Winkies!”

Whistles and cheers split the air. “Speech!” (again) cried Madge Entah, cheerleader of the Careleavers, and others took up the cry. This time it was directed at the young Docent.

The tall blond youth, who had tried, without much success, growing a moustache and beard as signs of maturity and authority, got to his feet. He was new at the game and didn’t think speech-making was quite as tedious as did his Queen.

“My friends—” he spoke—and those who were all-knowing might have recognized in his words a close, if not to say ‘exact’

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, resemblance between his opening gambit and that of a close relative of his in another setting far away and, by now, long ago! The difference was that an expectant hush fell now and his audience were keen to let him talk.

“—and by now you *are* my friends!” Henk insisted. “I don’t know if I’m going to be altogether happy from now on, not working to the cheers of chicory or the applause of apple-blossoms, not to mention the encouragement of eglantine or the goading of gardenias—”

“We rooted for you!” cried some roses.

“You did,” admitted the speaker, “and I’m grateful.”

“What about us?” spoke the stocks. “We stimulated you!”

“We prodded you!” prompted the primulas.

“Well, yes, you did do that,” confessed the engineer.

“We fomented you!” fumed the foxgloves.

“We heartened you,” hollered the hydrangeas.

“We nerved you,” noted the nasturtiums.

“We boosted you,” boasted the begonias.

“We animated you,” added the azaleas.

The lilacs couldn’t find words to express how they had felt, but that they had given their gracious imprimatur to the project no one doubted.

“Now we’re off—” and here Henk turned to press the hand of a striking young person at his side, which hand had somehow got tucked within his elbow. “—my team and I. Not to forget my genial mentor —” Here the speaker turned to bow to Dr. Em. Wogglebug, who occupied a seat of honor on the platform. More cheers drowned out the rest of the introduction.

“Word has come that the tin castle of the great Emperor, His Majesty Nicholas the First, is in a state of collapse, attacked by hydrogen sulphide, ammonia, carbonic acid gas, and a variety of salts, all familiar ingredients of our atmosphere. In the west of our land these vapors have become a little *too* familiar. We must act now or it may be too late ...”

Henkomankatogale spoke for another five minutes, but the attention of his sovereign wandered to the young person at the

speaker's side. They had met fleetingly at the opening of the ceremony but the Girl Ruler only now had time to study the girl's profile. But surely...? The brunette had been presented simply as the Forewoman in Charge of Works. But surely—was that not General Jinjur?!

Ozma's mind flew back to a time now nearly a century past when she (herself performing in a totally different persona, name, and sex) had had dealings with an imperious young woman who looked for all the world... But hadn't Jinjur later become Captain of Sorceress Glinda's palace guard? Was she that no longer?

The princess had to admit to herself that she'd lost track of the amazon for going on half a century, but that she should (without looking a day older) have become a hard-nosed (as well as -hatted) construction worker did not really surprise Ozma. Curious, the turns of destiny. The former threatener of the peace of Oz—and little Dorothy's son! Where might that friendship lead?

C H A P T E R S E V E N T E E N

The Tin Woodman knew the crow Kaggi-Karr well enough by now. She'd been making a delightful pest of herself for weeks. Sometimes he wondered if it wasn't time for her to go back to her alternate time strand, but he couldn't deny that she cheered him up and with her around the hours did steal past less like lazy cattle than they had done before.

But now suddenly the roles were reversed. It began one day when Kaggi couldn't find her pal, the Round Robin. There'd been a little tiff. Flatteringly (to the crow), R.R. had displayed little signs of jealousy because K.K. spent *all* her time in the company of the emperor. That, and the fact that the smog-laden atmosphere was getting on the nerves of both the outdoor-loving avians. High words had flown, and then so had the birds.

Kaggi went to her eyrie, a disused stovepipe opening in the upper wall of the kitchen. There she settled down with feathers flounced and eyes half hooded. She must do something for that pesky robin. After all, she was very fond of the jerk, quirky and know-it-all as he might be. But what? She'd have a good think about it

Then she had it! Suddenly it came to her, in the dead of day. She'd revive her Bird Messenger Relay Service—and R.R. could be the co-ordinator. Kaggi scarcely stayed to rough in the

outlines of her scheme before squawking: “Fregosa! Where’s the Round Robin?!” The cook’s name was not ‘Fregosa’. That was the cook in the Yellow Castle in the alternate-universe Oz, but Kaggi didn’t pay any attention to that difference.

“Search me,” said the Compleat Cook mildly. Since he’d cleaned up his act, the awful People Eater of earlier days^s and other time strands^{ss} had found gainful employment in the service of the Winkie emperor—who, in that other Oz had been the People Eater’s murderer! “Better ask Ojo,” Lewdoed ventured. And the crow went to do that.

Ojo, a likeable Ozite who’d gone into total retirement once a book had been named after him, had come *out* of retirement when he observed what a good thing another young sprout named Number Nine had made out of being majordomo to President Scarecrow. He determined to seek a similar position in the castlehold of the genial Tin Woodman—and the Woodman, being so genial, had hired him.

“Search me,” said Ojo mildly in his turn. “I saw him last, oh, more than an hour ago. He said, ‘I’m going out—and I may be some little time.’”

Chill foreboding gripped the crow when she heard those fateful words. She rushed to a window (what was left of it) and peered out. But of course in the all-pervading smog she could see nothing.

In her alarm and unease she went and perched on the Woodman’s spare (inadvertently) leg and relieved her worry in chat until such time as R.R. might turn up again. Unfortunately, he didn’t. The crow’s discomfiture, deepened into depression. Nick Chopper, unable to bear the sight of suffering creatures, especially dumb animals—and even ones so little dumb as the crow—went all out cheering her up. In the process he managed very efficiently to cheer *himself* up. But not Kaggi-Karr.

Weeks passed gloomily, then one day Nick announced: “I’ve sent for Henkomankatogale!”

§ See *The Frogman of Oz*.

§§ See *Volshebnik Izumrudnogo Goroda*. Editor’s notes.

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“For *what??*” snapped the crow sulkily.

“You know: Dorothy’s son. He’ll soon be finishing up his dome over the Charmed Garden” (that’s where R.R. had gone, had K.K. but known) “and may be wanting another project to follow it up with. We could certainly do with something of the sort here. I do believe, if I once had my house and self in under shelter from the acid rain I could galvanize my tinsmiths to regalvanize myself, knowing I’d be safe from further corrosion.”

“Oh, what a good idea,” pipped Kaggi-Karr and tried really to care. But when Henk and his work crew turned up -three weeks later and the Round Robin was found to be of the company, Kaggi perked up totally - and then some. She pecked R.R. viciously to show how much she’d missed him, and from then on the crow was on cloud nine.

She took over the endoming of Winkiezia and bossed it to completion. The Woodman emperor’s castle and the small city nearby stood on a sizeable little plateau so here Engineer Henk had to bring his more egg-shaped dome into play. ‘The projects were getting each time immenser.

This fact, and something else, were bothering the young genius. “Everything’s taking too long!” he complained worriedly to his womenfolk: Ms Jinjur and the crow from Alternate—Oz. “It’s great fun, of course, but these installations are getting to be fairly routine. You’re overseeing the operation so efficiently, my dears—” Here a loving hand-clap on the shoulder of his forewoman and a wink for Kaggi-Karr. “—that I haven’t got much to do. It gives me time to worry about Mum. It’s going on half a year! What’s happened to her?! Why don’t we hear something?”

“Princess Dorothy’s doing just fine,” reassured Jinjur. “She has her protective amulet with her. You know that shields her from even the smallest harm.”

“But why don’t we get any news?”

“Rome wasn’t built in a day. Even our—your - domes aren’t! It was known she’d have a tough job talking world leaders into going over to magic power—”

“Say!” broke in Kaggi-Karr.

“What?” said the two humans and looked to the little crow indulgently.

“Sorry. I interrupted you, Ms Jinjur. Go on. Mine can wait.”

“I was only going to say; Princess Dorothy’s stubborn. She won’t report back till she’s made some headway. Apparently she hasn’t. But what was your thought, K .K .?”

“You mentioned powering by magic,” burred the crow, starting to rise on a thermal of enthusiasm. “Why the heck aren’t we ‘powering by magic’ right here?! That’d speed up your project, and give you more time, Docent, to get busy on a couple other little operations.”

“Explain yourself, Kags,” required the engineer.

“Prof. Wogglebug tells me you designed the air-filter dome construction simply as a blue-print for capable magic-workers to operate from when putting up domes more or less everywhere. So why are you laboriously building them by hand?!”

“I see what you mean.” Henk laughed. “Well, I had to make sure in practice that my studies weren’t just paper castles. I’ve had to iron out the bugs - that is, all except *one* bug!—as we went along.” Perhaps it was just as well that the Doctor Emeritus was not present at this confab!

“Well, but you’ve done that by now, dear,” reminded Jinjur. “That’s the reason the job’s gone stale for you.”

“Well, so I thought:” said Kaggi-Karr and polished her claws on her lapel, “why don’t you turn the construction part over to Sorceress Glinda and that crowd from now on? That’ll leave you free to work on two other projects...”

“Which are?” said Henk with a smile of patience.

“The first one will take you—what? a day and a half: plans for the rebuilding of this awful drafty old castle.” The crow waved a wing to indicate the zinc-plated sheets that clumsily patched an area where the drawing-room wall had fallen down. They rattled a bit mournfully in the stiffish breeze.

“Great.” Henk grinned with real delight at the suggestion.

“I thought perhaps brass next time...?” added the crow. “That

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is, if we can get the Emperor to go along with it. Brass would fit much better the—supposed!—color scheme of this country—as well as not falling down in the first next acid-rainstorm.”

“Though under the dome that wouldn’t play any part now!” reminded the engineer good-humoredly.

“Right. It was just a thought.”

“But, Ms Karr,” resumed Jinjur, “what was your other proposal?”

She told them.

C H A P T E R E I G H T E E N

Painfully Dorothy crawled along the railroad tracks.

Oh, she wasn't all that exhausted — though she *was* wringing wet and more than a bit disheveled. But it was the gaping gorge below her that made her fail to trust to her footing in tripping blithely along the ties.

Just a couple more yards now. Once more a knee brought forward, once more the hands advanced and clutching at the rails. "One more step, Lao-Tsen!" she encouraged herself, quoting *Lost Horizon* as usual. "One more step."

Played out (well, anyway spiritually), she collapsed when on terra firma again, then crawled to the little railway-workers' hut she had spotted and pushed aside the door. Oh, thank goodness: nothing but grass sprouting through the floorboards, a few empty beer bottles, and some last year's leaves. The fair young princess of Oz drew her soaked burberry about her, crouched in a corner, and fell asleep.

Heaven knows how many hours later it was when she was wakened in pitch dark by the noise of a crash. Whatever!? And wherever?! The racket had not come from her immediate vicinity. She herself was safe from whatever had smashed. But that made the magnitude of the crashing noise even more awesome. It must be on the other side of the river chasm.

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She struggled to her feet and looked out. Brrr! The New Zealand late autumn night was chill. What with the dark and the smog she could see nothing. At least whatever it was hadn't burst into flames. Then in the distance a flashlight gleam shone out with startling brightness and silence. She could see dark figures moving about. There had clearly been a road accident, but there were survivors!

Dorothy's curiosity grew intense. With the greatest caution, remembering the brink on which she perched, she got out on the railroad tracks and tried to see better. Now she made out indistinct voices from over the gorge. The lurching silhouettes seemed to collect themselves and begin to move off in a body. But *down* the road: east. "Oh, the sillys!" gasped Dorothy in exasperation. "There are no towns down that way—or even houses—for miles." Impulsively she cried, "Hallooo! over there!"

The moving light stopped.

"Back up the road!" cried the girl, some might say rashly. Still, *she* was trying to contact the *others*, not the other way around, so she thought she could count on having little to fear from them, whoever the people might be. "Go back up the road! the other way. There are railroad—railway—tracks there. Cross by the viaduct..."

"Indecision gripped the carriers of the lamp but then slowly the light and the scattered outlines of humans began to move back up the road.

Dorothy hollered encouragement. "The ties are really quite broad—wider than the spaces between. Go carefully and there shouldn't be any danger: I'm sorry: I'm too—chicken-hearted to try to cross it again myself... No, really, it's all right. It's only a shallow ditch there; even if anyone fell he wouldn't be hurt." Happily the night was too dark and visibility too nil for her thumping lie to be evident. "There's shelter over here!" she urged. "You'll be all right 'til morning."

The figures approaching at a fitful snail's pace along the tracks were gradually revealed as those of men. When the one in the lead, back-lighted by the torch carried by one of the middle

figures, got close enough to stretch out an arm to her, Dorothy still could not recognize him as Arbol Cortador, a Winkie wood-cutter. He recognized *her* and broke into hysterical sobs of what sounded more like laughter than tears. The other five woodmen came the closest they had done to falling into the ravine out of sheer marvel when it was borne in on them what had taken place.

Dorothy got them into the hut, where there was just barely sufficient room for them all to sit squeezed together on the floor and talk all the rest of the night.

When the one incredible fact had imprinted itself on the woodmen's consciousness: that Princess/Dr. Dorothy Choggolak was impossibly *there* (having arrived by hitch-hiking),

in the dark middle of nowhere, with them, the next most important revelation was that the driver of the woodmen's minibus was dead and they themselves badly shaken. Near-death (of course they couldn't completely die) of exposure and exhaustion on the deserted road might well have been a possibility for them if they had not found shelter with their friend.

"But where in the world were you coming from?" pleaded the girl.

Arbol Cortador made as good a spokesman as another. "There's a camp meeting of the Seventh Day Witnesses at New Copenhagen tomorrow. The people at Auckland thought we ought to make an appearance there. I don't know; we've given up trying to exercise any sort of control over where they send us—"

"Oh, the same thing with me!" wailed Dorothy, and this time the sob was one of pure distress. "Isn't it terrible? Nothing's gone as I thought. I've been shoved about from pillar to post. I've seen nobody that was any use. The nearest I got was the Prime Minister of the Seychelles and he thought I was trying to sell beauty preparations to the island girls!"

"The Seychelles'?" echoed Skog Vedhuggar, who thought she had said 'sea-shells' and had to have a little lesson in geography before they could go on.

"We spent weeks at a vocational school in Goroka, P.N.G.,"

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related Arbol. "We arrived there to find we were engaged to teach a six-weeks crash course in Forest Management. We had no choice but to stay. We were turned back whenever we tried to make a break to the airport or the harbor."

"Don't I know!" laughed Dorothy half hysterically. "The same thing with me. I got railroaded to Oman, where at first they were indignant because I wasn't wearing my yashmak and then decided I was the highly recommended English schoolmarm who had come to cure illiteracy in the emir's harem!"

The friends sat crammed together in their cabin and talked the night away, regaling each other with accounts of all that had seemed awful at the time but that now they could afford to laugh at - a little.

"But what about this bus accident of yours at the last?" insisted Dorothy. "Are you sure you're really all right, all of you?"

And your poor driver! How dreadful. Are you sure...?" she said again and broke off. "He's dead?" someone replied. "I'm sorry; the driver's seat took the brunt of it. He's wedged in; trapped - and unconscious, if not worse. I'm just awfully afraid—"

"We should have stayed there!" insisted Bûcheron Arbrisseau. "I said so."

"The first passing motorist will stop," reassured another, "and then go for help. Must've happened already. And what could we do? freezing out there on the road?" They rationalized. One must, when the chips are down, to guard one's own well-being. The physical entity fights to survive, cost what it will in mental anguish. Talk fell off at long last and they were subsiding into exhausted slumber.

That was broken into by cheery singing. "What in the world?" said Skog and stuck a rumpled head out the door. In the sooty pre-dawn he could nevertheless make out the figures of two - three... no, four! male individuals picking their way northward along the railroad tracks.

"Oh, no, this is too much. This isn't happening!" gasped the Ozite, withdrawing his head into the but again to stare at the

groggily waking others with big eyes.

"What is it?" barked Bûcheron.

"You're never gonna believe this," said Vedhuggar.

"I don't. But you hear a dulcet voice caroling across a crowded room?"

"I hear. somebody singing—outside—if that's what you mean."

"Don't you recognize the voice? It's Forrest Sawyer."

Yes, it was. After they all got through screaming at the unbelievability of it all, Forrest explained: "We've just come from Antarctica. Yes, I know about the ozone hole; we've probably got every known form of cancer by now. But the Hollow Earth people don't believe in that. We fell in with some of them at Valparaiso. They were on their way to prove there's an entrance to the hollow interior of the Earth at the south pole. The idea was to lead a pilgrimage of humans who would survive the smog pestilence inside the earth and live to repopulate the planet after everyone else was dead. There are vast virgin forests in the inside of the earth, you see, and we were to be in charge of lumbering operations there - to build houses."

"And did you find it?" the hut-occupiers all asked, fascinated.

"Well, no - but the entrance is there!" The Hollow Earthers seemed to have made one convert anyway. "But somehow our plane overflowed. We landed at Queen Maud Land, and then the mission seemed to fizzle out. We were all left to get back to civilization the best way we could."

"Here in N.Z. they just thought we were nuts," Legno Tagliabosco took up the tale, "—oh, not as Hollow Earthers, but when we told them we were from Oz! We've been pretty much on our own. Now we're trying to work our way up to Auckland. Mr. Fatte refused to see us at Wellington. There seemed nothing left to do but try to cadge a plane ride somewhere from the international airport."

"This," announced Dorothy Choggolak "is a miracle. That's all. Or rather: it's proof of our magic - and nobody but us to see it!"

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“How do you mean, Dorothy?” asked Waldo Baumschneider, registering sympathetic concern.

“Well, don’t you see?: it’s a sign from On High! that our effort is bound to succeed. We were brought back together *for a purpose*—so we wouldn’t despair and go home in disgrace.”

No one had known before that the princess believed there was anyone On High, but this seemed to indicate it.

“So what do we do now, Princess?” asked Woody Hackett.

“Let’s discuss it.”

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

It was the turn of the Sticky Twins to feel a bit out of it. Since they'd been endomed and the endoming crew had gone on their way, life had seemed a bit dull. All their flower visitors had flocked off, of course, to follow the progress of dome-building at their own Charmed Garden and there was nobody left to talk to except each other and Aloysius Pussy.

"I wish we could take in lodgers," said Fweetie over a morning treat of pepper steak and green persimmons.

"We've got the space for it; I'll give you that," admitted Thyugar. "Since this dome's here, it's like all outdoors is part of the house. There might as well be people sleeping out there: all fine and dry, and not cold."

"Oh, you thought 'people', did you?" said Fweetie, spreading marmite on crack-bread. "I was thinking rather plants. If we could get a crowd of the Careleaver Kids to come back and settle here..."

"They couldn't," objected Thyug. "As I say, outside is as dry as inside. Haven't you noticed it never rains through? The grass is getting all brown out there - which is better than black, I suppose: But I don't think Mr. Mankatogale's scheme is working right. It's supposed to filter out the dirt but not all the weather completely."

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“Well, it was his first project. Looks like he hadn’t quite perfected that feature of it.”

“Anyway, I’m game,” conceded Thyugar. “Plants, people.. animals. Whatever. How’ll we go about it? Put ads in the *Ozmapolitan*?”

“Say, that’s not a bad idea! But I was thinking; maybe we could go see Glinda—”

““Go see’?! Are you starkers? I’m not venturing out in that filth beyond the dome. Look!” Thyug waved a viscid hand through the breakfast room window (now always, blessedly able to be left open). “Beyond the dome? It’s gone completely black out there, or else a very very very dark green. We’d be just impacted dirt balls by the time we got to the Ruby City.”

“You’re right, you know.” Fweetie gave his sister a sticky kiss. This was to indicate that there were no hard feelings because a female had assessed a situation righter than a male. Yes, unlikely as it seems, the twins still had sex—I mean, they still possessed distinctions of gender—though having gone completely glycid.

“Will you phone, Fweetie darling?” said Thyugar, being sweet in her turn.

“Oh, er..Glinda? Sure thing.” Going to the telephone, Fweetie scraped off with his breakfast fork some of where they had used the instrument the last time and rang through.

“B. Jones speaking,” spoke a voice.

“Hi, Bucky. Fweetie McCloy here. Say, is Glinda available?”

“Just a sec.” And indeed it was not much longer than a sec before the genial enchantress’ voice was heard.

“Your Highness?” said Fweetie subjectively. “Sis—you remember; Thyugar McCloy?—and I were thinking; now that we’ve got this snazzy dome over us keeping out all the harmful impurities—well, maybe it’s kind of selfish of us to have it all to ourselves. So we were wondering: have you got any plants that need a home—or animals? Well, or people, if it came to that...”

“Why, Fweetie, what an astonishing thing. Within the half hour I’ve had Princess Ozma on the wireless hook-up. She says

a crowd of young children—I think she said thirty-four! —have arrived in Oz. Well, not exactly ‘in’; they’re at the Mirror Gate. You know?: at the Unnikegwick border. She’s on her way down there and I’m to join her. Obviously we can’t turn the little mites away just like that. They’ll have to be given at least temporary shelter. I couldn’t think what to do; some kind of displaced-persons camp out on the desert? But now, your proposal—well, it really does seem like an answer to prayers. What do you think? Could you cope with thirty-four tiny tots? Isn’t it the queerest thing? They arrived in a bus! It makes you think of Mrs Carmichael, doesn’t it? And now that I mention her: *She* might be able to have a few at her boarding house. But what I meant to say; the bus didn’t get blown here in a tornado or anything. It drove across the Great Sandy Waste! Apparently it took them weeks; the kiddies were a bit vague about that—and there were no adults among them. It seems the driver just deposited them there and turned around and headed back. Frankly, Ozma isn’t altogether pleased. It’s so inexplicable; maybe it’s just the merest fluke; but the Princess did say, ‘What if this were just the thin end of the wedge?’

It’s true; what if now somehow crowds of people can just start turning up in Oz at random? I would say it’s kinder to be cruel. We really can’t have just unlimited immigration. Just for now, however, we’re going to have to come up with a solution as to where to house these little things. Ozma says they are rather pitiful. They don’t look as if they’ve eaten all that regularly while they’ve been on the road. Ozma’s taking along the makings for a cream tea with strawberry short-cake; they’ll have a little welcoming party there under the palms. Her informant, Till Orangespiegel, says they’re being as good as gold! Not a one has been naughty or had a crying fit. Till gets the impression they’re making a superhuman effort. They seem terrified they may not be let in and they’re trying awfully hard to behave. It’s not right for children, is it? They ought to be having a good time, laughing, playing, maybe enjoying a few sweeties. Oh, as for that, I don’t think you and Thyugar need feel at risk at all. We’ll

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warn the children you're not to be eaten - not even tested! Still, it might not be a bad idea, if you're going to have them - and to avoid temptation!—to lay in a supply of eatables other than tabasco tarts and quinine custard. So what do you think? Feel like trying?"

Then the Queen of the Quadlings waited to hear what Master McCloy had to say.

C H A P T E R T W E N T Y

“Isn’t it too annoying!?” Kaggi-Karr was as mad as a wet hen. “That pesky dragon refused to come! I’ve never heard of such a thing. ALWAYS before he’s gone along with the idea when Elli—I mean, Dorothy—needed fetching and carrying to and from the outside world. But can you imagine?: he balks at first having to make the switch to an alternate-universe Oz and *then* venturing out into the great world. That last part’s what he’s really afraid of. I *told* him creatures from Ozzes live a charmed life, nothing can happen to *them*—but no, he didn’t want to risk it.”

“What,” said Henkomankatogale, “are you going to do in that case? I suppose—er, we do still want to make the attempt?” He didn’t sound all that sure.

“Darn tootin’!” squawked the crow. “But I’m afraid it’s back to the drawing board for you, Docent. But look!” Belatedly the queen of the Bird Relay Service brought forward a bunch of little men who were standing, hats in hands, looking abashed. “I brought these along instead. This is Lestar—” The crow went to perch on the shoulder of a grey-bearded little fellow in a purple kaftan. “He’s the leading artisan craftsman back in the Violet Country over there (that corresponds to the yellow—that is, brown—one here). And there are his crew. That’s Tejollicle, his

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Chief Assistant—and Ezgud Cheeb—and Rovianno—and...” She named the whole seventeen of them.

“They’re all brilliant technicians in various fields. They’ll carry out your orders to a T.”

“Which are...?” Henk managed to smile indulgently.

“Why, in default of that wretched Oyhho, you’ll design and build a flying model!”

“Oh.”

“And listen, we can make this contretemps turn, to our advantage. Instead of a silly self-stuffing live dragon that has to eat a herd of goats every day, our dragon will be hollow! We can all ride inside, instead of in an idiotic little house strapped to its back. Don’t forget; we’ve got to have room for eleven grown people, besides the navigating crew.”

“This is going to hold us up, you know.”

“Yes, a few weeks. I’m as sorry as you are But what would you? There hasn’t been any message yet from Do- your mum?”

“No. I’m badly worried.” That’s why Henk’s indulgent smiles were so tentative.

“So let’s get cracking! Here, Les—” At a sign from Kaggi-Karr the artisan rolled out across the floor the calibrated plans for a creature of the genus *Draconus volkovii*, recast for assembling from wicker and reinforced parchment.

Henk cast an expert’s eye, then exclaimed, “It’s designed already!”

“Not really,” Lestar hastened to reassure. (Everybody in all the Ozzes speaks the same language. Don’t ask me how. That’s one of the real mysteries of faerie.) “We’ve only reinterpreted the skeleton and musculature of the living animal as an exterior framework. But there’s been no testing. We aren’t at all sure where the stresses, the pressures would come in actual flight, what parts might have to be strengthened, or others perhaps done away with—in the interest of lightness, for instance.”

“Oh that won’t be any trouble to calculate,” Henk assured. “But as for the coating fabric; I wonder if parchment’s going to serve? For one thing, the Emperor will—take a dim view—

because of the number of sheep or goats it would take!”

“What would you suggest?” said Lestar, open to suggestion and greatly interested. “What about paper-thin tin? The local tinsmiths would love to get into the act on that. As for the increased weight, we could possibly make savings elsewhere.” The engineers were in their element and moved off, followed by the other new arrivals, to the mechanical workshop to which Emperor Nick had had the former ballroom converted when the palace was rebuilt (brass with tin decorations!). *They* would be having fun for a while.

Chief Assistant Jinjur was perhaps less delighted. She had arrived on the scene of Kaggi-Karr’s expected but not exactly pin-pointed return from Alternate-Oz a few minutes late and in the absorption of the study of Lestar’s plans nobody had introduced her. Now she watched the crowd of men herd to the doors and had very mixed feelings. Should she stamp her foot and throw a fit? No, that’s what a silly woman would do, and Jinjur was concentrating on showing that women were every bit as worthy as men and consequently not given to temper tantrums and demands for special attention. Well, okay, as good as a man she’d follow along to the laboratory just casually, like she belonged there.

No, damn, that was no good either. Here were all these midgets stopping and gaping at her like she had two heads. And there was the chief, turning, looking back, blushing, and starting to stammer, “Oh, er, Master Lestar, let me have the pleasure of introducing—er, oh, my fiancée, Miss Jinjur...”

The numbskull! Why couldn’t he say “This is my gang boss”—short and sweet—“she runs the show for me”!? But even then!; why did it have to be “she”?! The language forced one to it. It was ruddy unfair! There ought to be a third-person pronoun that referred to creatures without regard to sex, where sex made no difference.

Jinjur stood still and shook hands mechanically when the eighteen Alter-Ozites filed past solemnly and paid their respects.

Then she said, “Refreshments! You all will be wanting some-

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thing after your journey from afar. Beer? Wine? Mineral water! And snacks. I'll bring a tray."

And she turned and marched the other way, toward the kitchen.

Kaggi-Karr flew after her and perched on her shoulder. "Well done, sir!" said she.

And then; "I'm sorry we haven't got a word for 'sir-regardless-of-sex' ..."

C H A P T E R T W E N T Y - O N E

"Quite pretty round here, isn't it? That is: it would be if you could see it."

"Mmm. And we might get a lift if anyone could see US!"

"Oh, I think they do - but only just as they pass us and then it's too late to stop."

"I suppose they don't dare, the traffic's so thick; they'd get rammed from behind."

"And yet at night there's hardly *any* traffic."

"The visibility, buddy! If we can hardly see our hands before our faces for smog by day, at night I guess they can't move faster than a snail's pace, so very few bother. That of course makes daylight traffic all the thicker."

"Still, you'd think someone *might* give us a lift. Was your luck as awful as this, Dorothy, coming up the valley?"

"No! It went very nicely, one ride after another, until evening came on *and* it started to rain. People never pick up people in the rain—just when they need it most!"

"Well, why don't *we* get a ride? It's been hours! and not a one."

"Use your head, Albero! There's eleven of us. Who's got room for that many passengers?"

"I suppose we might split up...?"

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"Not on your life! That's the one thing we're *not* going to let them do to us again. Otherwise we'll never get back to Oz."

"So I guess it's just hammer, hammer on, down the hard highway..."

"Oh, look, the sun's coming through!... I suppose that *is* the sun, that dark cherry-colored thing?"

"Yes, that's the sun."

"And look, boys, it *is* 'pretty around here'. I can actually see - oh, almost miles. Those are mountains over there! and purple."

"And with the sun that little lake is almost blue."

"What about this yellow grain field right by the road?"

"And the green one across the way. And—oh, look!—that plowed-up part down there. The soil is red!"

"Oh, good heavens!"

"What is it Dorothy? Dear me, you've gone quite pale."

"Does this remind you of anything?"

"Well-l, the red earth of Tara perhaps?"

"How green was my valley'?"

"Purple mountains' majesty'?"

"Oh, no nothing as literary as all that. But think ... The colors!"

"Oz!!"

"Of course! And I know where we are now! At least, I'm almost certain. It must be the same place..."

"As what?"

"You must all have read it too. One of the leading Oz chroniclers visited New Zealand and wrote that he'd come to a place that he recognized at once as Oz—well, almost—because of the colors. Here they all were, all at one time, and nothing artificial about them. Of course in those days colors everywhere were so much brighter. Don't forget there are half as many people again in the world as there were then, and an even greater proportion now of dirt and pollution... But this must be the very place..."

"Gee..."

"Wouldn't it have been wonderful if they had stopped right then?: frozen population and industrial development and—oh,

everything -that makes life dreadful now.”

“Mmm, it must have been quite a paradise then. Even as short a time ago as the end of the eighties there were still many quite nice places—almost clean...”

“What do you mean: ‘must’? It *was* a paradise in those days. We were alive then! We can remember how grand it was. And the further back you went in time, the more paradisaical.”

“Oh, stop it! It’s making me so homesick I could scream. Oh, how I wish I were back in Oz!”

“Shh! Don’t say that. You might find yourself back there before you intend—”

“There’s no danger, Bûcheron. You know you’ve got to twist your ring and rub the amulet at the same time.”

“There are other ways to get to Oz.”

“Yeah, but those are secret. We’ve sworn not to use them, to just forget we even know about them.

“Uh-oh!”

“What?”

“What’s he looking; so ghastly about?”

“I forgot... I just remembered.”

“And you other guys; ‘what’s got into you?’”

“We told.”

“You what?”

“We told some kiddies how to get to Oz.”

“Some’? We told everybody we met for a while there.”

“Oh, no, you never—!!”

“We did. It was when they dug us out after that plane crash. We figured we were dead, or near to, and all bets—and vows—were off. We talked pretty loosely about where we were from, and how we wanted to get back there if we only could.”

“I don’t suppose they paid any. attention anyway, did they? Nobody ever seems to.”

“I’m afraid they did. Anyway the kids. They loved the idea. Of course they never heard of Oz. But when we blabbed the magic words, they loved saying them over after us. Some of them made notes when we talked about how you could get there both

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by land and by sea, if you knew the right passes to make.”

“Oh, well, never mind. Nobody in this outside world *really* believes in magic.”

“Unfortunately they do—by now. Some of them anyway.”

“What do you mean?”

“None of us can work any visible magic!”

“Our button-holes.”

“Button what’s?!”

“Yes, Dorothy, you remember; when we met the Careleaver flowers that time. Each one of us woodmen picked a button-hole. I see you’re all still wearing them too. My nasturtium blossom here—and Woody’s cornflower—”

“And my carnation!”

“Well. . . ? ”

“Well, they overheard us talking to them.”

“So what?”

“Some of the kids, especially the little tiny ones ... ”

“Yes?”

“Well, *they* could hear the flowers talking back.”

C H A P T E R T W E N T Y - T W O

The two queens held a hasty session of the Emergency Council of All Oz (or E.C.A.O.) at Glinda's palace.

Normally Oz is governed by fiat. There is no popular assembly. By no stretch of the imagination could Oz be called a democracy. As Alexander Volkov winningly expressed it; "Somehow leaders were chosen without recourse to tedious elections." Whatever Ozma took it into her dear little head to do was law.

However, just occasionally, a problem would crop up that even someone who looked like a ten-year-old girl couldn't solve off the top of her head. This seemed to be one of the occasions.

The busload of children from Canada had been efficiently settled with the McCoys, nor was anything more said about their being required to leave Oz. Then Johnny Doit's sandboat arrived at one of the formal frontier entry gateways crammed with little people Johnny had spotted wandering on the Impassable Desert. He thought that was it, but the very next week more refugees were found out on the sands, even—rather horrible to relate—some badly desiccated small corpses; that was on the fringes of the Deadly Desert, a part of the great wilderness that had always proven fatal to trespass upon.

At that Queen Ozma organized a patrol of volunteers to man ozoplanes to keep up a round-the-clock vigil along the borders

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of the really lethal parts of the deserts. It simply wasn't possible to permit anyone to actually die while trying to get to the fairyland. Still people seemed to be arriving from all directions, and, of course, if you knew the right gestures and procedures, you didn't have first to pass through the outer ring of small countries on the Oz continent in order to get close to the central magic land. Soon Doit had equipped a whole fleet of sandboats which made regular scheduled runs across the various deserts, transporting refugees.

The E.C.A.O. was to take a look at the big picture and what it entailed for Oz. All the leading policy-making figures in the fairyland attended. Including various kings and rulers of minor constituent lands within Oz, the number of the delegates came up to 106. That ought to be sufficient to decide what was right for the country, thought Ozma.

While unlimited amenities still obtained, Glinda served a glittering buffet. Who knew when rationing might have to be enforced? if the country was to be flooded out with new arrivals.

Perhaps it was the tastiness of the dainties that had an o'erswaying effect. Of course no one actually said so but the thought must have struck a good many of the delegates: 'Despite the smog things are still pretty wonderful in Oz. But how wonderful is it going to be if the country is covered solid with tent cities from border to border?' So when it came to a roll-call there was a resounding majority for closing the frontier hermetically from midnight of that very day.

"All right," said Glinda to Ozma at eleven-thirty that evening, as reports flowed in that the cordon sanitaire had been efficiently established. Ozoplanes with every facility for telescopic viewing were doing a twenty-four-hour patrol of the Oz periphery. Sandboats loaded with armed immigration personnel were primed to dash in wherever strangers might be observed trying to breach the frontiers. "That takes care of those who arrive in vehicles or on foot from across the surrounding deserts," went on the Sorceress. "What about those who turn up by magic

within the country itself, without benefit of border crossing?"

"Oh, goodness," said the little fairy ruler. "I never thought of that. But what—? Surely you don't think...? No one's arrived that way yet!"

"No, but they will," warned Glinda sombrely. "Those dear but dopey woodmen as I fear, sooner or later will reveal to somebody just how easy it is to get here without any laborious preliminary land or sea journey. And when they do—"

"But, Glinda, the woodmen would never be so mad as to part with their rings and amulets, the only means for them themselves to return to Oz when the time comes."

"My dear Princess," rebutted the sorceress. "They don't have to *part* with their talismans."

"Oh, great heavens, of course not!" Ozma stared aghast, with big eyes, after doing a swift mental recap and realizing that, in deed, you didn't have to "part with" a wishing ring for its magic to be effective. As for the complementary amulet, all one had to do was *reach across* and stroke it. She began to giggle almost hysterically.

"Your Majesty!" said Glinda, alarmed. She didn't think she'd ever seen the Girl Ruler in such a taking before. "You really mustn't give way."

Ozma fumbled in her sleeve for her green lawn handkerchief and wiped from her eyes tears of real merriment. "I just happened to think," she gasped. "You know this rather whimsical scheme of the group at Winkiezia? To send a pre-fag dragon to the outer world to 'save' Dorothy and the ten woodmen? I've been very sceptical about the plan, and, in point of fact, have not as yet given permission for any such launching. Now I'm going to! - immediately. But the goal of the expedition will be another: not to save the woodmen, but to save us *from* them! "