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## C H A P T E R     F O R T Y - F I V E

What in the world was Kaggi-Karr the crow doing all this while? the reader may well have asked himself. And where was her sidekick, the round robin?

Actually, they were along for part of the time—on both the big ex-Oz ventures! But let us tell their tale as a connected whole.

K.K. was much gratified at the electrifying effect of her news at the Mount Vernon West. She perched above the chamber door—not on a bust of Pallas exactly but on a cable-T.V. aerial installed there. From that vantage point she directed the woodmen's packing.

As has been noted, it is one of the true magical mysteries of Faerie that everybody can understand everybody in fairy lands. That includes animals, and often plants! and a good deal else. But also, as is well-documented, when normally non-talking creatures come away into the great world they no longer have speech, *except* to other creatures from the fairyland. Hence, the ten woodmen had been able to go on conversing with their buttonholes - but Dorothy couldn't. It was the same with Kaggi-Karr. The Oz men could catch every syllable she uttered but to originally outer-worlder Dorothy in Suite A it was all just raucous bird caws.

She felt out of it, and was soon to feel much outer, when the

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crow insisted the Kansas girl not come along on the proposed rescue operation. But triumphant Kaggi-Karr was soon to know the pangs of exclusionary treatment herself. For the nonce she bossed enjoyably (just as Dorothy enjoyed doing) the scurrying woodmen. "That's right: all your magic gear in that satchel. That's vital, both for the journey there and afterwards... No, don't bother with skis and snowshoes. Alaska's not the North Pole! The summers, at least, are quite equable... Now we'll need a sizeable bird-cage. I don't want to be cramped. What?!! no bird-cage? Well send down to the lobby shops for one... Oh, never mind, we'll stop at a pet shop on the way to the airport..." And so on.

Kaggi was gratified by the speed of the airplane. That was as fast as she could do herself! But she felt sadly frustrated when the men reported to her in her cage on a chair in the Juneau Visitor Center that they contemplated taking a pokey old train. "Oh, lud," she griped. "I wish they'd *kept* the line closed. Still, I suppose the bus or a coastal steamer wouldn't be much faster." She too attempted to take Forrest S's advice and leave off fidgeting and enjoy such of the scenery as could be made out through the veils of haze.

But what was this? At Lake Bennett, British Columbia, the train changed crews. Canadians replaced Americans for the run on to Whitehorse. The passengers got off for lunch, and everybody was requested to walk past the little customs house. That was just a formality. Only not this time.

"Excuse me, sir," said a polite man dressed more or less like a Royal Mountie. "Birds there, have you?"

Tajar Madera, carrying the cage, gave a start. "Er, yes. These are our faithful feathered friends. They go everywhere with us - and they love trains!" he lied fluently:

The official had seen their American passports and said, "Oh, it's quite all right as to entering Canada. But I take it you're going on into Alaska? The birds won't be allowed back across the border there."

Oh, murder. Who could have imagined this?

Our heroes and heroine had to withdraw to a bench on the

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station approaches and confer. Kaggi-Karr scoffed. "Hah! what do I care for your borders? I cannot be frightened by them. Hasn't that fellow ever noticed birds have wings? Open the door, Tajar, please. We can fly across any border, and we don't need passports, thank you!"

But after her little show of defiance K.K. had to come down off her high horse. Anyway it was too pokey for words having to squat in a cage while the train wound its slow way and later a bus would do the same, scarcely faster. Wouldn't the Alaskan officials at the other end be suspicious about the woodmen's empty bird-cage? Also, Kaggi and the robin couldn't fly around loose in the bus after the border. The whole situation was too picayune and vexing.

"No!" announced the crow. "Here's what we'll do." She longed to be out in the great free spaces anyway and she recalled nostalgically their noble flight to Seattle when fates of nations hung on her wings - and those of her companion. "We'll do a liaison with the dragon voyagers on Diomedes, or wherever they've taken them, then rendezvous with you at Fairbanks. We'll be there before you are! "

So she reasoned. But it didn't work out that way. Maybe Kaggi sensed something of what might happen, for she said to Forrest S.; "Got your magic bits handy? I noticed you had invisibility pills there. Swallow one, R.R. I'll do the same. Never know what prison cells we may want to enter, sight unseen. And don't bother about looking for us at Fairbanks," she laughed; "we'll find *you*." To make the job easier, however, they agreed on "in front of the post office at high noon" X days thence. Then they flew away invisibly.

The fine summer weather didn't play the birds false. They made good time. And what did they care for mosquitoes? They swallowed them with gusto and flew on. Neither did hostilities, sporadic as they looked and sounded, bother them on the Seward peninsula. They merely didn't find any traces of their erstwhile traveling companions on Diomedes. There they lost, perforce, valuable time while Kaggi-Karr hung around groups of the

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military until at last she overheard a tip about the fate and destination of the “enemy” captives.

Once again great issues hung on the wings of a little black bird from an imaginary country. Well, on those of the tractable Round Robin too—but let’s face it: his role, important to our heroine though it was, was chiefly that of confidant and company to the masterful crow. He didn’t even have any interpreter duties to perform as they flew over Alaska. It was only when they would reach Soviet territory that it was going to be useful if somebody could understand the local lingo for eavesdropping purposes. Once when the invisible pair landed amidst a group of locals outside a leather tent and tried to overhear, the people turned out to be talking Tlingit (though the birds weren’t to know that) and R.R. proved useless as an interpreter.

In the same way they tried to pick up the odd bit of useful information from animals but when they landed on the budding antlers of a juvenile moose whom they found waltzing about in the muskeg and they spoke to him in Animese, the poor beast was terrified at voices from invisible sources and tore away across the tundra without vouchsafing a single sensible word.

Luck of a sort was with the birds. They caught up with the Ozite captives of the Soviets just as they were boarding the plane for Moscow. There, in a puff of smoke, went the date in Fairbanks! It was too vital to the birds to find out what the fate of their comrades from Oyhho II was going to be.

Naturally the birds never let out a peep during the flight. They managed to pick up some crumbs of those pirozhki though. When their friends were shown to their cells in the cellars of the Kremlin, the two just followed along silently and invisibly. But you can be sure there was a joyous reunion as soon as K.K. and R.R. found themselves alone in a cell with Henk and Professor Wogglebug.

“I wish we could reverse our invisibility, docent,” said Kaggi-Karr presently, when the first fine fervor of their expressions of gladness died down, “but you say you salvaged nothing of your magic from the crash?” Well, there are our return-to-Oz charms;

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thank goodness we've all still got those! But I guess you'll just have to make do talking to empty space for the nonce. Other than that, though, the invisibility's been invaluable."

Thus the two birds were present at the famous 'trial' scene. They too gasped rather when Henkomankatogale made a monkey out of the Top Commissar. But the clever little crow kept her wits about her. Shielded by her invisibility she was in no rush to wish on her claw ring and invoke her neck talisman as did the Round Robin and the rest. So it was that, to her amazement, she saw her countryman from Other-Oz, bearded Lestar, remain near the Chairman as the latter resumed his place and turned to see - his captives vanish.

That brought on, a few moments postponed, the baffled rage that everyone had expected the instant the Chairman came to himself and realized he'd been turned into a figure of fun by the ringleader of the enemy aliens. He grew red in the head and personally laid hand on good Lestar to detain him.

"Oh, I wasn't going anywhere, Mr. Chairman," spoke Lestar mildly. "I thought I should stop behind and add my apologies to those of my leader, Commander Henkomankatogale, for any inconvenience or indignity you feel you have suffered. It was really very naughty of my friend." Lestar aimed to make light of the whole affair, though not to the point of claiming the joke had been a good one.

"Never mind that!" said the chairman. "I'll survive. No doubt I never should have let myself get into a position where it could happen—"

"You were always in the position," corrected Lestar still as mildly.

"What?!" near-roared the chairman and his jaw came near dropping.

"One or another of us could have turned you at any time into a page of the late Czar's diary or - oh, two kopecks' worth of pepper on a market stall in Kiev. Oz magic is powerful."

The Chairman sat down in utter flabbergastation. He'd *seen* the magic working. He had no reason to doubt Lestar's

statements.

In a moment he collected himself sufficiently to look about to where the other members of the Presidium were standing around not knowing whether to flit or go blind. He made a dismissive gesture of the hand. Then, when his brother officials still hesitated to leave him alone in the company of the dangerous unarmed five-foot-tall enemy alien he barked, "Get lost!" They did.

"Tell me more," he said and indicated that Lestar should sit down at one of the spectator desks vacated by the commissars. "Most of all; tell me why your confederates disappeared. That's what angers me. I had use for them here!"

"It was all agreed in advance," related Lestar. "Great magicians as they all are, it was never their intention to remain in captivity a moment longer than it pleased them."

"Why did it please them to stay this long?"

Now at last Lestar could explain to somebody who cared about listening the whole genesis and purpose of the flight of the dragon dirigible.

"We came to the outer world to prove the efficacy and beneficent power of magic. Only, we were intending to show it to the western world, not the eastern."

"Does it matter?" said the Chairman. "You were you say, planning to do good to the *whole* world, not just part. Your friends succeeded brilliantly. All of us who saw are now believers. So why did they leave?"

"Because they were prisoners. In Oz—and elsewhere—it only pleases us to make our contribution if we are free."

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The Musical Moose (he'd already graduated to capital letters in the minds of the delighted ten woodmen, a thing they themselves hadn't even yet done, though perhaps it was about time) just wouldn't quit. Besides liking the inaudible tune of the mosquito pipes he also found irresistible the eighteen apples in the woodmen's sack. He could smell them from a distance, you see. He nosed around until he found them and then ate them every one, leaving none for dessert or the woodmen.

"Oh, now, this is really too bad, " said Spokesman Forrest, though with a twinkle. "They were to have tided us over till we got to Galena, at least. We must turn back. We can't go on, out into the wilds, without emergency rations." He turned and started walking toward Ruby. It was eight o'clock by now. Things might start to be open.

The moose followed. The woodmen would have tried to shoo him away but he was too popular. They all loved the gangling creature practically on sight. Perhaps he reminded them of Oz, where animals were not afraid of men and shoved themselves in everywhere.

It was nine o'clock by the time they climbed the rise into the bustling settlement. Moom was right with them as they discovered a little post office and beside it a tiny bank. "Musical Moose"

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had already been shortened in the speech of the woodmen to "Moom". (He was not to be confused with 'Moomin' which he was nothing like.)

While the others kept Moom from being run over by the six-bys that thrummed through the few and dusty streets of Ruby, Forrest went in and flashed his credit card and passport to the youthful Indian clerk and got some folding money. "How do people get around here anyway?" said Sawyer, "now that air travel's cut out. My friends and I are trying to get to Nome but we're stranded."

"You must be real new around here," said the boy. "Haven't you been down to the river?"

"River?" Forrest reflected. "We saw it in the distance. Yeah, it did look a little busy. What's the story?"

"The government commandeered all private water craft. They're running everything from rowboats to yachts as ferries - and for free!"

"Well!" said the Ozite and grinned in relief. "We figured they'd have to do something but we hadn't heard a word. We know from experience everything goes on by air but with that traffic grounded—and no road beyond Koyukuk—" The woodmen's representative had done enough reading up on the bus to sound like an old sourdough now!

"Go down to the new bridge works," directed the amiable youth. "Anything you see moving on the water's fair game. For a little something extra you can probably sit at the captain's table."

As a matter of fact one of the vessels moored at or near the unfinished-bridge end *was* a ferry but it wasn't just going tamely across to the other side of the heretofore unbridged Yukon but downstream. Admittedly they had to wait five hours for its scheduled departure but then they were assured of transpo as far down the river as the southern bend at the delta, if they cared to go that far.

That left the woodmen time to lay in provisions - and get rid of Moom. He was a darling, of course, but they didn't see how



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their rescue operation was going to be expedited by the addition of a moose. They walked out of town again and sat on a bank of earth where they looked out on the Yukon and the confluent Melozitna River and there they had a feast of their store-bought delicacies. There was no paté d'Alsace, of course, nor yet Dolcelatte, but the sourdough bread, boloney, Wisconsin cheddar, and kosher dills tasted good enough. There was even a quarter bushel of oats for Moom.

The insidious moose tried to seduce them with Terpsichorean wiles. It came about in this way; Legno Tagliabosco, who was carrying the bag of magic tricks in his backpack, set it from him rather brusquely to scabble for his mosquito pipe. The insects clustered especially terribly when the men settled on the bank to make their sandwiches.

In his gropings within the rucksack Legno must have hit the catch that activated the pocket orchestra. Suddenly, deafeningly, the great symphonic theme of "Stella by Starlight" boomed out across the tundra. Moom gulped down his current mawful of oats and went into his dance. Violently he jiggled up and down and out into the middle of the road, causing heavy lorries to swerve and drivers to curse. Some of them stopped and gaped, even offered pleasantries to the ten eating woodmen all in a row, suggesting that if they were a circus then indeed Moom was their star turn.

Legno turned off the orchestra when eventually they headed back to town. Otherwise it would have gone on playing "Stella", inventing new variations on the theme, until it *was* starlight. Even without music Moom followed patiently and persistently after.

At the riverside people were queueing up to go aboard the great raft-like ferry launch. Our friends mingled with the crowd, looking as if a moose were no different from any other item of cattle. There were sheep among the prospective passengers as well. Yet when it came to basics the ferrymaster drew the line at meese.

Oh, dear, crisis. What to do now? Actually, more than one of the woodmen thought their rescue expedition was well charac-

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terized by the addition of an adolescent moose. The quest was in that degree whimsical and hopeless that they might well, for all practical purposes, step back from the ferry and let it go.

And yet! it wasn't so much whether they could in fact do anything effective about saving their compatriots from the Soviets. They were country woodsmen from a land, albeit powerful in magic, that was naive about methods and conditions in the "great world". The point was that they must be seen to be doing, however quixotically, their duty, a duty they had never volunteered for but been politely pressured into. They were sturdy men and true. They would do what was expected of them yet a while. Nor were they imaginative enough to think of any other way they could forward their cause than by plugging onward. They must go with the ferry. In five minutes it would shove off.

They looked at the moose beside them, ready to go aboard, looking forward to the next lark, wondering what the hang-up was. His big eyes looked questioningly from one to another. They thought what the look would be if they could tell him, in words that he could grasp, that the party, the fun times were going on without him. He would be left behind.

No, that stricken look they couldn't face. A sudden thought took Arbol Cortador. He twisted something on his left hand, yanked something from his neck and pressed it against Moom's drooping muzzle. "Go to Oz!" he said, and added one more whispered word.

The Musical Moose left the muskeg and the tundra forever.

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## C H A P T E R   F O R T Y - S E V E N

It stands to reason, doesn't it? How else was Moom going to have all the adventures described in *The Musical Moose in Oz* unless he went there? But at first Princess Ozma couldn't understand why there should be a moose in her bedroom.

Once again she reminded herself of the old queen of England. However, instead of being routinely indignant she tried to get some insight into the social and psychological stimuli that could drive the animal to invade her privacy.

"Do sit down if you care to," she invited, plumping up the pillows behind her and getting comfortable herself.

The moose burped something unintelligible, then said, "I don't know if I can," in a voice that wobbled disconcertingly between bass and treble. "Hey! Listen to that! I'm talking!"

"Yes, you may also do that if you like," conceded the Princess graciously.

"I don't think I can do that either," protested Moom. "I've never talked or sat down in my life."

"But you're very young, aren't you? These things will come to you," reassured Ozma. "There's no getting away from it when you're Irish." She wasn't quite sure why she said that, but she *had* just watched *Gone With the Wind* that evening on Home Box Office.

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"I'm not Irish," declared the moose forthrightly. "I'm Alaskan."

That made Ozma sit up straight in bed and no mistake. "Alaska?! Oh, tell me quickly, did you see ten rather gormless-looking men and a couple of little birds: a black one and a fat round one with a red breast?"

"How funny that you should ask that," said Moom, splaying his long legs out like tent-poles and getting comfortable himself near the bed end. "My dearest friends are ten gormless-looking men. I was just with them a moment ago. I can't think where they've got to—or how I got to where I've got to. As for the birds, I don't think I know them."

"I think I understand," said the fairy, who by now was good at deducing in what fashion totally unexpected visitors would suddenly appear in her presence. "Do you happen to remember if one of the men said 'Pryzxlgl'? just before you lost sight of them."

"Why, I believe one of them did murmur something to that effect. Why do you ask?"

Ozma explained. "Now don't be frightened but those men, those friends of yours, are magicians of a sort and I believe they sent you to me. This is a magical land, you see, and we can do things like that from time to time. What was their message?"

"Message?"

"Yes, didn't they tell you something you were to tell me?"

"No-o. That was the last thing anyone was thinking of. We were getting on a big raft and were going to make a trip on the great water, I think..."

"What great water is that?" asked Ozma, already herself at sea.

"Why, just the Great Water. That's what we always called it, home on the range."

"And you didn't—I think I gather—follow what the men said to each other?"

The moose blushed. "I've led a sheltered life. I never met any of the stand-up animals before today. But they were so

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nice..."

"I quite understand... Yes, I think I see.. Well, Master Moose, make yourself comfortable until morning. Have a lie-down if you like. Here's a pillow; I don't know if you care for such things." She tossed it into a corner of the room. "No, don't eat it. It's for laying your head on. Here, wait a minute." Ozma fumbled in her bedside table and fished out her overnight wand. "Whlipps! Frlipps!" A heap of crushed oats, green hay, and dried apple rings appeared beside the flung pillow. "In case you want a snack in the night... Pleasant dreams."

In fact, Princess Ozma was relieved that no one other than a moose arrived in her bedroom that night. The plague of unexpected immigrants to Oz had burst all bounds and the country was drowning in them. No one had yet quite figured out how they got there but the overland refugees were clustering in an ever-widening band all around the perimeters of the country (except on the deadliest side). Deputations of public-spirited citizens were out and about twenty-four hours a day distributing emergency rations among them. Meanwhile the by now literally thousands of people who had dropped in on Wizard Wam occupied a tent city on the Munchkin-Gillikin border that was already the second largest community in Oz. Now in the last few days interlopers had been turning up by the dozens in the presence of Queen Ozma herself. At least it was a bit of a change to get a moose.

The next day Ozma and her advisers questioned Moom in depth but learned no more about their questing friends the woodmen than that they were all still able-bodied enough to eat sandwiches by the roadside and to walk down to a river. Afterwards the newcomer was sent to join the Sawhorse and the Woozy for company in the stables.

For four days nothing happened that was new in kind. Queen Glinda had arrived for yet another crisis conference with Ozma and her staff, when the nine escapees (plus the round robin) arrived from Moscow. "Thank Oz!!" cried the southern sorceress fervently. She shook hands almost violently with Commander

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Henkomankatogale (who had Dr. Dorothy around his neck) and said, "At last! we can get on with encasing Oz in fibre-glass. Would right now be too soon to begin, Docent?"

Henk released himself from his mum's embrace and welcomed Glinda's proposal. It was good to be back in a position to do something effective for his native land. The shame of having been an ineffectual prisoner in the cellars of the Kremlin still clung about the young man, nor was the memory pleasing to him of having so far given way to paltry spite as to turn the Chairman of the Communist Party into an ape. He wanted to get busy with a job of work and exorcise the past.

Glinda and the docent were on the point of rushing off to the Throne Room (which was located at the precise geographical center of Oz, from which the endowment must take place) when Ozma intervened. "Would that not be a little premature, my friends?" she enquired, with a grave twinkle in her eyes.

The Oz-savers bridled.

"Had you not noticed that a couple of your party are missing?" asked the Queen.. In truth: it was only a moment since the refugees from Oyhho II had performed their magic return to Oz and they had not yet counted heads. "Good heavens!" cried Dr. Em. Wogglebug. "Where's engineer Lestar?!"

"And Kaggi-Karr!" whistled the Round Robin in consternation.

"Oh... oh-h!" groaned Henk in sudden agony of conscience. "I thought I got them all out—but oh! I didn't. If ever the manly youth were near to tears it was now.

"Don't worry darling," shushed his loving mother.

"They've got their charms. They *can* always get back, whenever they want."

Nevertheless there was an agonized hour or three of uncertainty before the two truants finally turned up. By then Ozma had reason to be glad the conference had gravitated to the capacious Throne Room.

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The testy Chairman was offended. He had no objection to holding prisoners. The cellars of the Kremlin as well as the salt mines of Siberia were full of them. But he did take umbrage when anyone he was talking to *referred* to that person's own incarcerated state. It was a lapse from good form, he felt. He thought he would punish Lestar for bringing up the distasteful topic by having him put in irons. It was reminiscent of Hitler, who required of his staff that they never tell him what they had done with the Jewish children, because it made him cry.

The great Soviet was more realistic than that however. He remembered that Lestar in handcuffs might find it hard to manipulate the magic implements, which it was the Chairman's firm intention to find out the workings of. Therefore he restrained his temper and said equably, "Since you're bringing the gift of magic to the *whole* world, may not I too be a sharer? Please show me how the—er, toys work."

But of course Lestar wasn't about to do that. His (and his compatriots') mission had been only to prove to the outer world that magic was real. Later on they could reach an agreement on just which forms of magic would be supplied to make industry and modern civilization in general smokeless and gasless and so put a stop to at least aerial pollution. It was nobody's plan

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that the instruments aboard the dragon dirigible be delivered over for indiscriminate use and mischief-making by un-magic-indoctrinated other-worldlings.

At that point Kaggi-Karr, until now unseen and unheard, got into the act. On her depended, though nobody could guess it, the final triumph of magic in the world - and its immediately subsequent crashing defeat!

She was perched on little Lestar's shoulder and of course he knew it. When she heard the Alter-Ozite say that he would sooner sicken and die than reveal the secrets of Oz magic, she croaked into his ear, in what passed with her as a whisper; "Are you crazy? *Tell* him how they work! It can't do any harm. As he says, they're really only toys; a bit of flashing colored lights and programmed hallucinations. There's nothing they can use as weaponry. And think of

the publicity!; when they find out at the U.N. that the top Communist believes in magic - and uses it! Why the world will beat a path to our door! ."

"They have already. I think that's one of the things Princess Ozma is afraid of," Lestar whispered back.

"Are you rehearsing spells, Mr. Lestar?" asked the chairman. "And what is that croaking noise I hear?"

"That's my familiar, your honor," replied polite Lestar. "I never do any magic without my loving crow beside me. She's invisible, of course."

"Ah, splendid," The Chairman rubbed his hands in satisfaction. "So you are going to demonstrate a little magic?"

"My familiar recommends it," conceded Lestar.

So the Chairman was shown all the procedures and he took notes furiously. Of course the false, fleeting - but by no means unclever - creature at once figured out how to use the gadgetry, if not as weapons, at least to throw consternation into the ranks of his adversaries. The very next day a Soviet government jet, suitably disguised as Yugoslav, landed at Jakdools Airport and surprised the ground crew by appearing to be empty except for the pilots. In fact it was crowded with Russian spies who had



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swallowed invisibility pills and now made their way to the Pentagon, where they had a glorious time.

Lestar and Kaggi-Karr were not to know that, however. They were conducted with all due ceremony back to Lestar's cell. No doubt the Chairman realized what he would probably do now but it didn't matter; he had had his use of the Ozite.

When the little artisan joined the prison chow line an hour later and saw the downcast faces of all the people who had dared to criticize the regime, he passed the whispered word along; "Join hands and hold on for dear life!" Then he twisted his wishing ring, looped his arm through the belt of the man nearest him, grasped his neck charm with the other hand, said that certain word, and dropped down in the Throne Room of the Palace of Magic—along with forty-two anonymous Russkis. Kaggi-Karr followed a moment later.

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The ferry went so slowly (and stopped so often) that the ten woodmen almost thought it really was the big drifting raft it much resembled. In fact, it was equipped with twin dynamos that kept it chugging along at a steady rate. It stopped at night. Nobody out in the West, except the woodmen, was in that big a hurry. The passengers would get off and make their way up the bank to log cabin lodges run by Eskimos. The woodmen shrugged and followed along. They tried to heed their own advice: 'When you can't speed it, enjoy it.'

By day, standing at the ferry rail, they stared out across the broad, still cleanish water to the mountains on one side and the river flats on the other. For the moment (which was lasting a few thousand years) the Yukon seemed to be carrying on a love affair with the western range of hills that ran south from the Arctic Circle three hundred miles to the river's vast double delta. It clung close about the base of the foothills as if trying to shelter under their skirts—all the way to the sea. Or perhaps the river's aims were more predatory. It was going to chew away and consume the highlands and leave them a flat wet plain such as it had created to the east and south all the way from Ruby to the ocean.

Sometimes the woodmen caught glimpses of the wild life

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that abounded in the vast and (even in this age) un-built-over region. There were rare sightings of muskrat and beaver, if you had field glasses, and the woodmen did. Sometimes far away an Indian file of wolves could be seen. By now the sight of caribou and moose was beginning to be familiar to the Ozites and when that happened they thought of Moom and wondered what kind of a figure he was cutting in the court of Ozma of Oz. But most to be seen were the water birds that literally filled both sky and river. Far from the mass of mankind, and in the relatively clear air that made the sun look only vermilion, not deep scarlet, the bird life burgeoned. No wonder. Forrest, from his study of the guide book, could tell his friends that the great delta they were coming to was one of the largest waterfowl breeding grounds in the world.

“How come exactly?” said Waldo Baumschneider, who tended to be a thought more thoughtful than most of his fellows. “How come there’s all this waste ground up here? I read that something called the ‘greenhouse effect’ is supposed to be giving the Frigid Zone almost a temperate climate by now. With the population burst you’d think people would have covered all this region with buildings by now—and put an end to much waterfowl breeding.”

That was something Forrest’s reading had informed him about - and he could also think for himself. “Hah!” he scoffed. “That green house effect! How much of that effect do you get when the greenhouse has a tin roof over it and at each end a high-powered refrigerator installation with all the doors open? That’s what kind of a greenhouse the earth is now.

“Why the very books that tell you that increasing air pollution dooms the earth to a continuous warming-up effect—despite each present-day winter being longer and colder than the one before - usually also contain a chapter describing how every major series of volcano eruptions in the past, which filled the air with extra dust and gas pollution, resulted in extra-long and severe winters in the years immediately following. Those experts don’t seem able to grasp the logic of their own state-

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ments.

“Anyway, forget about the greenhouse effect. With snow lying thick nine months of the year, most of Alaska isn’t going to get built over all that quick.”

At the southernmost bend of the broad Yukon all the remaining passengers got off, to board the waiting busses and trucks for the trip to Bethel or the many Eskimo villages in the delta. The woodmen were left low and dry. As they looked out on the empty, vast, and wandering air to west and wondered how they were ever to cross land and sea to Nome, they may well have quailed, and looked back on the lazy days aboard the Yukon Queen as to a halcyon.

Magic, however, came to their rescue. Now it may seem strange to some readers that the woodmen, possessed as they were of a sack of assorted periapts brought from Oz specially by Monique Mulroony, made no use of magic to forward their toilsome cause in Alaska. Kaggi-Karr had been the only one with imagination enough even to make use of disappearing pills for the purposes of the round robin and herself. Even the ring/pendant combination used to wish Moom to Oz was not something from the emerald box but a device that the men had got used to bearing in mind as their ultimate resource just in case things got *too* sticky.

However, aboard the ferry, times when time hung heavy for all the passengers and Forrest Sawyer pondered how he might beguile that time, he happened to think of the magic tricks they possessed. Of course the first time after Montana that he was on his own (with just his nine pals around) and unobserved by strangers Sawyer had tried out the contents of the, by then departed, box of spells. He’d looked at the pocket orchestra, but quickly looked away. They all of them remembered how *that* worked!

He twirled the knurled wheel on something like a cigarette lighter. Suddenly the air in Suite A was charged with the heady fragrance of Evening in St. Louis. The fellows all looked puzzled. Forrest spun the knurl again. A delicious odor of actively oper-

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ating brewery filled the room. The men caught on. Again a twirl and a haunting scent of fresh roasting coffee. And again: the glamorous aroma of night-blooming jasmine on a tropical isle was smelt. By then they all understood the genius of that toy.

Tajar pulled an ordinary-looking clay pipe from his pocket. "Try that," he said. Forrest read the directions: 'Dip in hair spray and blow'. Well, none of the boys used hair spray, or, indeed, had ever heard of it. They rang room service though and before very long an economy-size bottle was delivered at the door. They dumped it in the bathroom basin and dipped the pipe.

Oh, now that was fun! though maybe it was scarcely "magic". When you puffed into the wetted pipe a big *opaque* bubble gradually formed which, when it got big enough for its interior air to out-unweigh the semi-permanent skin of the air-globe, detached itself from the pipe and drifted to the ceiling where it bobbed about like a toy balloon. The magic seemed to be that the babbles didn't pop and that the rainbow iridescence of them, though lovely, was not transparent. You didn't get those effects using real-life bubble pipes.

Now, sitting on a capstan aboard the Yukon Queen, the woodmen's chief shed a nostalgic tear for the pocket orchestra. It was to have delighted President Koxden at the mayor's home in Seattle and caused him to call off Star Wars and initiate Operation Oz. Now it was useless. Forrest still couldn't think of any way to advance the rescue of his countrymen in Communist captivity by displaying again the infinite riches of that little room. Still, a little music couldn't hurt. He flicked the On switch.

The effect on his fellow passengers was electric. They of course had all been listening on their own head-sets to brought-along tapes or to radio hillbilly. They turned; as one, affronted faces to Forrest Sawyer because he presumed to annoy them with a great symphonic theme. Quickly he shut off the pocket orchestra.

But general attention had been directed, if very fleetingly, to the woodmen. Otherwise nobody had given them a second glance, supposing them to be a mere party of hunters from Ohio

## THE TEN WOODMEN OF OZ

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caught on their sportsmen's holiday by the outbreak of war and now presumably trying, rather feebly, to get back home.

Now, as the men stood on the dock and looked bewildered, two of the Eskimo youths whose musical enjoyment had been disturbed, came up to them, lifted the butts from their lips, and said, "Where you tryin' to get to?" Their faces were expressionless.

"Oh, er—well—across to Nome actually. We're prospectors—just for fun, that is."

"There's a war on. Ain't ya heard?"

"Oh, yeah, we sure did. But we couldn't just drop dead. We thought we'd try to get on to our destination - and then see what happened."

"Wanna travel in an oomiak?" Despite their unprepossessing expressions the youths seemed to intend to be helpful.

"Oomiak?"

"Yeah. Skin boat."

Now the young men were skinheads. That style was in recurrent fashion again. But "skin boats"? Then Sawyer remembered a reference in his guide book. "Oh, the traditional means of getting about on water of your people?" he quoted knowingly. The youths just looked perplexed.

The Ozite spokesman decided to try being more down-to-earth. "Big boats made out of seal skins?" he essayed.

"Yeh—or sea lion," said one.

"Yeah, or walrus," offered the other. "You mean sail with you in oomiaks to Nome?" queried Forrest, getting excited. "We can pay, of course."

"Yeh," vouchsafed the Eskimos.

Just like that it was decided. Some of the woodmen were of several minds about getting into the two big, sturdily constructed, but withal slight-looking (in comparison with the broad waters of the Yukon) craft moored at the riverbank fifty yards downstream. Still, they did it.

It might be tedious to continue the guided tour of Alaska, describing the woodmen's paddle journey of a night and two

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days down the island-and-bird-filled river to the sea. It certainly would be painful to have to relate how the initially so less-than-appealing-looking locals lived up (as so often happens) to the first impression they made. The youths and their fathers, plus one extra individual of that generation, presumed to be an uncle, proved surly traveling companions. They kept to themselves, did not offer their passengers any of the reindeer jerky or cold sourdough pancakes they shared out among themselves, and pretended at times not even to understand English, although their transistors kept up a steady background commentary in West Virginian with musical accompaniment.

It was when they reached the mouth of the estuary that they turned nasty. Not to say that they pulled any intricately carved, bone-handled example of native craftwork on the guileless Ozites. If they'd been prone to use knives they also would not have minded forcing their victims overboard once out on the wide waters of Norton Sound.

No, they just wanted the money.

When the woodmen, after expressing the thought that, after such kindness, that was a dismal thing to do, declined to part with all the rest of their ready cash, the Eskimos got tough and took it from them.

What?! did ten sturdy lumberjacks funk it? and give up their all without a struggle? I'm afraid they did. At least: they didn't "funk" it. They were not cowards. They would gladly have laid down their lives for something important. But they were nice guys, and nice guys all too often are thoughtful guys as well. They think, 'Is it worth it to lose a few teeth and/or an eye or so for the sake of mere money/possessions?' With health (which they had) all objects can always be got again, but if you lose your health (partially anyway, in the form of departing eyes or teeth), plus, naturally, the objects which get taken away from you anyway, where are you?

Nowhere, realized the ten, and handed over.

Having succeeded so neatly, the natives went for more. They despoiled the luckless travellers of all their equipment. That

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meant the magic as well, though that particular theft ended by providing the woodmen with the last laugh. One of the younger of the 'waterwaymen' appeared to have remained impressed with the capabilities of the pocket orchestra—hence the latter part of the robbery took place to the tune of "Stella by Starlight".

On the north bank of the river, where the mighty Yukon flows into the Bering Sea and not far along the beach from the delightfully named hamlet of Kwikpak, the brigands put our 'heroes' ashore. The downcast decemvirate stood on the muddy sand and watched their f'alse benefactors push off in the oomiaks and disappear. Not the oomiaks. Just the Eskimos.

It seemed that the thieves had discovered amidst their loot the clear glass tube containing the invisibility pills. Being on whatever cheap drugs they could get access to, they were delighted with the find and, on the principle of 'Swallow it first; see what it s good for afterwards', the five gulped down the entire lot.

That sight—or absence of it—was enough for the woodmen. Splitting their sides with glee, they made off as fast as they could go along the sea beach northward. It just might be that the oomiakists, blaming their disappearance on their victims would put to shore again and pursue them, desiring them to undo the spell. It was bad enough being robbed by the miscreants thought the woodmen. they didn't want to have to wrestle with them as well, they being both incensed and invisible.

They needn't have worried: The Eskimos had no thought of such finesses as deactivating magic spells. Rather it would seem, from the sound of angry voices borne over the waters and of a resounding splash or two, that they had taken to wrestling, sight unseen, among themselves.

In time the oomiaks too disappeared but in a natural way, as they drifted away south and the ten Ozites hightailed it north. When at last they found themselves quite alone in the sub-Arctic vastness the men slowed down. Then they shuddered.

An aerial photograph made at this point would have shown the woodmen as infinitesimal specks on the wave-lapped shore



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of a massive sweep of flat dark brown earth that curved round north to northeast: earth that was mud and gravel, deeply scored by seas and glaciers into an infinity of ponds and creeks that stretched in fan-like pattern as far as eye reached, all golden in the late afternoon sun. There was no tree, no blade of grass, not a thing that lived except the thousands of sea birds that flapped and dipped and squawked desolately.

It was the end of the world. Or if not, it would do very well until the real thing came along. As for signs of humanity, they were limited to the occasional squadron or single war-plane that streaked soundlessly across the far high sky north-westerly.

Oh, desolation.

And yet if they insisted on looking on the bright side, there were consolations. The little off-sea breeze kept the mosquitoes away. And it was going to be bright daylight all night long for their two-hundred-mile stroll along the shore of Norton bay to Nome.

Smiling hysterically, almost without speech, the castaways set off.

They had gone but a short way when the ten woodmen saw in the distance walking toward them a little girl. At least, she was wearing a poke bonnet and the broadly flounced, almost crinoline, but short skirts of a little girl, though in face and figure she was revealed as being of—oh, about the age of Judy Garland in the film of *The Wizard of Oz*.

It was Dr. Dorothy Gale Choggolak of Kansas and Oz, and in her company, perched on her shoulder, was a little black bird. Also along, hauled out of mothballs for the occasion, was a small black dog whom several of the woodmen recognized as Toto.

With screams of bliss the two parties ran forward toward each other and threw themselves into as many arms as they could manage.

Afterwards, sitting on the damp muddy sand, Dorothy told her story.

## C H A P T E R F I F T Y

It all began—said Dorothy—when that charming mooseling arrived at the palace in the Emerald City. Moom was able to reassure us that everything was still all right with you men and that your quest was going on apace. For the time being everything was still uncertain: there had been no word from our friends from the dragon dirigible and the Magic Picture continued to show them as in custody but not in danger. There was even still a chance that your rescue operation, with a lot of luck! and, the plentiful use of magic, might succeed.

The aeronauts had, as you know, been captured by the Russians but what you could not know was that they'd been taken to Moscow. Still, we were sure that you'd have as much presence of mind as Kaggi-Karr here and make yourselves invisible and perhaps smuggle yourselves onto an airplane and get to the Russian capital just as she did. There was just the chance.

Some time later, however, that chance was proved vain. All the castaways from the dragon flight returned, by the use of their rings and pendants safe and sound to Ozma's court. Kaggi-Karr and Lestar came in a few hours later, with most startling news and also with forty-two Russians, who have chosen to make their home in Oz. It was all most exciting. Ozma appointed me to be in charge of a special housing committee to find places

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where the new arrivals could stay. As a matter of fact, since then about half of them have gone back to Alternate Oz with artisan Lestar- it was thought they'd feel more at home there.

For me it was such a delight to be able to talk to Kaggi-Karr again. I'll admit I'd been cross with her for making me take my leave of you all at Seattle but still I had to admit it was for the best. I've been able to make myself quite useful to Ozma in the meantime, and what good, after all, could I have done, tagging along with you to Alaska? I'm sure you've enjoyed just being bachelors together, roughing it, telling racy stories, perhaps even picking up further lady friends. But no, I mustn't be catty...

At the same time dear Kaggi was most contrite and admitted that—though she's right most of the time!—she has made wrong decisions. Her latest one was perhaps the wrongest of all. May I tell tales out of school, dear Kaggi? Well, remembering, and very properly too, that Princess Ozma had sent all of us out into the great world for just one purpose; to convince that world that magic worked and to cause it to replace the fossil and atomic fuels in industry and transportation with magic power, the crew used her influence to persuade that same Master Lestar of the crew of Oyhho II to reveal to the Communist leaders in Moscow the functioning of those items of sorcery that had been aboard the dragon dirigible. What aid it matter? thought Kaggi. They were just toys, really, though spectacular in their effects.

Alas, the airship crew and sometime prisoners had been at home in Oz no longer than half a day when, in addition to the forty-two we already had, further dozens, scores, hundreds! of other Russians began to flood into the Emerald City!

Among the treasures whose secrets Lestar explained to the Chairman of the Communist Party had been an extra Return-to-Oz set. Lestar had been really uneasy about showing how that worked. Then Kaggi reminded him how, traditionally, the powers that be in the Soviet Union have always been opposed to letting anyone escape—I mean, emigrate—from Russia. Was there any reason to suppose they would reverse that policy in

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the case of so odd a destination as a land that was never in this world? The risk seemed minimal.

But woe! the guess was put to shame within five hours of the return of the last of the astronauts to Oz. As we've put together the story from the 'survivors', the Chairman was furious when he learned that Lestar had taken away forty-two imprisoned dissidents to Oz. Then, before half an hour had passed the Chairman—down in the Kremlin cellars where he'd gone to inspect the extent of the decampment—slapped his thigh and exclaimed; "Of course! What a good idea! What am I fuming about? They'd never make good Socialists anyway. And it's safer than killing them and cheaper than feeding them... Come here, you!", and he called to our informant, said "Pryzxl" (easy for Russians), and sent him to Oz! It would seem the Chairman was delighted with the efficacy of his ploy because within less than twenty-four hours upwards of a thousand Russians arrived in our capital city. Can you imagine! Ozma, in whose presence of course all the travelers by magic arrived, had to run to the ballroom. The smaller Throne Room just wouldn't hold them all. Naturally as soon as they appeared they were all sent off to be quartered elsewhere.

It had all along been intended that the moment all the Oz world-travelers had got back home the endowment of all Oz would be carried out. I had no sooner welcomed back my dear boy Henk than he put heads together with Sorceress Glinda and the two rushed off, respectively, to my alma mater, Oz U, and to the pink palace in Quadlinga, to fetch all their blueprints and implements for installing the great impermeable dome over Oz. That plan was mooted originally, you know, as just a last-ditch measure in case air pollution from the outer world couldn't be stopped. Now we needed it even worse in order to bring to a halt popullution!

Before the two could get back to the Emerald City all those Russians started arriving - and they're still coming! The endowment was suddenly terribly urgent. Everything's ready for it. It's supposed to take place at - oh, great heavens! thirteen

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o'clock sharp, Oz time. My watch says a quarter to! And I've been gabbing away.. Anyway, toppest priority was suddenly to fetch you boys home to Oz before the dome clamps down forever. Someone had to go to inform you, and of course I volunteered. We felt it was owed to you to have some explanation of why your quest is to be aborted—*before* it's aborted. I don't suppose any of you *want* to stay here on this barren beach..? For after all the people you were going to save are already saved.

We thought it would be amusing if I dressed up like the Dorothy of old. Then that suggested asking Toto to come along as well It was Kaggi-Karr's idea. She was still, dear bird, trying to make it up to me for her dismissal of me in Seattle. But also bothered her that I was so very little like the alternate Dorothy (HER name's Elli) who she had known sixty years ago, she said, in her Oz. She wanted to go on this mission with me. It would be like old times, she said, she and me together on a last-minute rescue operation. Only it would help if I looked at least the faintest bit like the Elli she knew.

So there you have it. And now, if you're ready, Forrest? Albero? Skog? and all of you good fellows. Look your last on all things lonely. No, don't bother about your amulets and rings. Ozma's looking at us in the Magic Picture. When I make the sign of "O" "Z" with the fingers of my two hands—like so—she'll wish us back to Oz. Ready? Okay, here we go!...

## C H A P T E R     F I F T Y - O N E

The dome was up. Hooray, hooray! What a relief.

Actually it was more like a cake-plate cover than a dome. The foot-thick shell of magiglass (like plexiglass but also impervious to directly applied heat, so nobody could blow-torch their way through it) rose up, all around the perimeter of the land of Oz, just short of vertically, about a mile high, then leveled off rather sharply to enclose the entire country under the transparent lid. Rain could penetrate it, the sun's rays shone through freely, winds might blow but with everything first purified of all the filth that mankind so assiduously spews into the air it breathes.

In the Emerald City Ozma gave orders that every window in the Palace of Magic be thrown open and the quickly purifying air be allowed to blow through at random to clear away the fuf of months. Then she declared a "House-cleaning holiday", to last a week, during which time the entire citizenry of Oz was take tank-carts of soap and water out into the streets and fields and forests of the land and wash the houses, the trees, and the rocks, Within a fortnight Oz was back almost to its ancient state of bright colors and pristine air.

In other ways too the entire citizenry was kept hopping. Houses had to be found for the sudden tens of thousands of

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new inhabitants. Magic was brought into play like fury and new garden cities rose like mushroom plantations. 'On the analogy of existing metropoli such as the Emerald City and the Sapphire City the new towns were given names of gems and precious metals. The crowd of businessmen who had strayed into Oz were settled in the Gold City, but otherwise there was little or no significance connection between town name and the type of colonists who were planted there; the Russians were gathered in the Tourmaline City and the Peridot City, the smash musicians in the Onyx City (the noise there *was* rather maddening), the American tourists in the Platinum-City and the Jade City, the Canadians in the Turquoise City, the latter two being locations that might have been expected to be populated by Chinese and Turks respectively, but as it happened there was no influx to Oz worth mentioning from those two nations—so far.

Queens Ozma and Glinda shook hands and considered themselves fortunate to have averted a worse fate for Oz. They looked up to the high 'roof' that gleamed almost two miles high above the great green city and they noted the rays of the sun being obstructed by the massed fly-specks of humanity up there. That was as far, you see, as Outer-Worlders could reach now, using the Oz-Return magic mechanisms. The wise wonder-workers touched a button on the wall of Ozma's throne room and activated a spray-hose system high up on the dome roof that soon flushed away the filth and let the sun shine in unobstructedly again.

The filth itself though, if one had been two miles nearer, would have revealed itself to be human beings, born, it is true, into a world grossly overpopulated, but each individual with his own dreams, seeking striving, hoping, waiting, yearning to be allowed into the one ultimate land of wishes come true.

To be flushed into the scuppers was painful for them, though not physically, of course. When Glinda, on the basis of Docent Henkomankatogale's blueprints, raised the great magic dome in a day, she provided that the roof clearing system be so arranged that smuts, and people, be swept into water shoot-

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the-chutes that sluiced them down the sloping sides of the dome and out onto the surrounding ground unharmed.

Under the dome joyous reunions had taken place, for instance, that of Dr. Dorothy with her son, as already described, and also of mother and son with husband, father, grandparents, mother-in-law, and whatever who was to whom. They all went off to a grand family gathering at Legerdemain Lane, which also did duty as a reception at which was announced the formal betrothal of Henk and Jinjur. The shared ordeal of Russian imprisonment appeared to have sealed the inevitability of the union of those two.

There were plenty of people in the remote forest fastness to play guests; all the thousands who had arrived from the outside world and been quartered in the big blue-purple barn and later on in the sprawling tent city next door. (This was shortly to be organized as the Zircon City.)

But other guests came to the great bridal party as well. There were all the hundreds of the proud mother's friends, too numerous to mention. Kaggi-Karr was there, feted and made much of. She'd had her way and achieved glory a second time in "original" Oz. For a last time she basked in it. Now she was to be off to show her pal, the Round Robin, what life was like in her own Magic-Land.

Dorothy wanted her friends the Ten Woodmen (now accorded capital letters by fiat of Princess Ozma in recognition of their true-hearted service in the cause of Queen and country for so many months) to be present at the gala occasion of her son's engagement. They came - and during the festivities bachelor Albero and spinster Cindy Lou met again for the first time since Seattle. They were surprised at how pleased they were to see each other. The pleasure deepened into regard and the regard, in time, gave rise to a whole tribe of attractive coffee-colored people, true pledges of devotion though scarcely needed in Oz's present circumstances.

The Woodmen were having reunions all over. First of course with their mentors, the magic-adepts Ozma and Glinda who



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had sent them on their odyssey in the first place. Besides capital letters they all received medals for merit in sticking to their quest till its equivocal end. For just plain fun, however, the men preferred their reunion in the north courtyard of Ozma's palace with their favorite, the Musical Moose of Oz.

What delight to converse for the first time with the dear creature! But also for the first time ever — and *after* all stressful shared vicissitudes were over — the woodmen fell to quarreling and fighting among themselves! This was because they couldn't decide whom Moom should go home with. There were ten woodmen, you see, and only one moose.

Queen Ozma finally decided the issue by declaring that the animal was not going off with anybody but would stay right there, living in his stall among his new messmates, the Woozy and the Sawhorse, as an ornament to her court. Naturally the woodmen would have visiting privileges. No one thought to ask Moom what he wanted to do. He was just an adolescent and wouldn't know his own mind. However, he had one — and one day would show the world what his preference was.

So on with the parade of reunions for the Ten Woodmen. When the jollifications at the fledgling Zircon City were over they went in a body to Winkiezia to report on the failure of their mission to the Tin Woodman of them all.

*There* was a wonderful state of improvement to be observed! Now that he was double-domed (it was decided not to dismantle the smaller regional dome over Winkiezia now that it had been so lovingly and laboriously erected; it just might come in handy one day) the good Woodman reasoned that he could venture upon a replacement of his parts. It did seem safe to assume he would never more be attacked by airborne corrosives. The method followed was geniustic in its simplicity.

The clever Winkie tinsmiths constructed, using the original as meticulously followed model, an entire new woodman out of virgin tin, complete with spats and bow tie. Then, once a week, a part of the new figure was inserted into the old, the ravaged original bits being piously kept and preserved. It was judged

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that a week was long enough (actually a few minutes would have done) to insure that a new limb had become a completely viable member of the living Woodman. Conversely, when once detached from the live man, the older corroded pieces of tinfoil became completely inert. (They were presently reassembled into a complete figure representing Emperor Nick as he had been before rejuvenation and placed on display, as a memento of a distressful epoch, in the Winkle National Museum, which occupied a wing of the imperial palace.)

The Woodman's heart had of course been protected from the ravages of grime. It was removed whole from his old body and placed within the new. It was a consolation to old friends to know that of the brilliantly gleaming new Tin Woodman that amazed their eyes one part at least was from the old beloved figure they had always known.

Nicholas I presented further medals to his loyal co-professionals who had so uncomplainingly carried out the operation none of them was really fitted for. A bachelor dinner was given and many toasts drunk to yesterday: to Queen Glinda and the training program at her palace, to the publicity agents and camera crew at Disneyuniverse, to polite attendants on planes and trains, to their faithful flower buttonholes (still fresh and feisty as they sat at table), to Princess Dorothy in the railway shack on the North Island, to President Koxden and the floozy ladies, to Kaggi-Karr and the girl in the Log Cabin Visitor Center, and even to the surly barnstormer pilot and the disappearing Eskimos. The last toasts were to the Musical Moose, and to His Magnificence, Emperor—and Woodman—Nick.

Then the odd-assorted, kindly, unclever, but by now rather experienced, Ten Woodmen of Oz went home to the last reunion of all; with their own families.

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## C H A P T E R     F I F T Y - T W O

Dorothy thought her adventures were over; not very satisfactorily, it is true, but certainly completed for this time. Sometimes she would reminisce, trying to recall where she had gone wrong, what she might have done differently, to achieve a modicum of success in her mission rather than merely pulling World War III down about everyone's head.

One day she happened to think of her sometime girl friend Najeeb Koxden and wondered what she was doing now. She strolled to the Hall of the Magic Picture, switched on the lights, drew back the protective curtain, and asked the wonderful instrument of magic to let her see the president's daughter.

The bland scene of Oz countryside faded into - rather startling darkness. 'Of course!' thought Dorothy, 'it's night where she is.' But as the girl watched on she realized that the scene was not nightblack; rather, it seemed to be a very very very dark brown. Also, she reasoned, 'If it were a night scene there would be lights showing - unless, most unlikely, Ms Koxden is in the midst of a forest without a lantern.'

Then as the princess gazed she thought she could see movement. Shapes in the prevailing gloom seemed to shift and change. She came to realize they were people—but *many* people, a great pullulating mass of them, pressing together, apparently strain-

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ing toward some goal which, however, they were prevented from reaching. And now at last a light; someone flicked on a cigarette lighter and some faces were lit up momentarily, among which the Kansas girl recognized that of her friend Najeeb, looking distraught, to say the least.

Dorothy wished like anything she could hear what the people were saying. It was obvious from her one clear glimpse that all of them were talking. Or rather, could those strained, open, but somewhat lip-motionless mouths be crying out or groaning? She longed for further looks, and now and then someone did strike a match and quite a few individuals seemed to be smoking, but the little cherry-red glow from their cigarettes was not sufficient truly to illuminate anything.

Where in the world could they be? wondered the Oz princess. All standing there in the dark, pushing and shoving. And why did nobody show a flashlight, or have candles lit?

Then somehow, she didn't know from where, the knowledge came to her.

Those people were standing among the vast multitudes of unsuccessful petitioners for entry to Oz who waited hopefully, though really without hope, in the near night-dark impenetrable smog outside the walls of Oz!

Dorothy gave a choked cry and rushed to find Princess Ozma. She was sobbing as she reached the orangery, where the fairy loved to potter among the plants. "Why, Dorothy!" she cried. "Whatever—"

The other girl broke her off. "Dearest, give me the key to the magic-cupboard, will you? I have to use the Magic Belt!"

She offered no more explanation as the Girl Ruler with a murmured "Yes, of course" detached the key from her girdle. But Ozma followed along out of curiosity as her chum ran off to the palace library.

She arrived in time to hear Dorothy say, "I want to be where Najeeb Koxden is" — and to see her vanish.

Even for the fabled wish-granting Magic Belt, trophy of Dorothy's successful campaign against the fell Nome King, it

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wasn't easy to squeeze the wish-carried girl in amongst the tight-packed mob around the president's daughter. When Najeeb finally made out who it was who was additionally crammed in beside her, the two friends fell crying into each other's arms.

"Dear Miss Koxden!" wept Dorothy at last, "what in the world are you doing here? and where are we?"

"Oh, Dorothy!" sobbed Ms Koxden, dropping titles in her distress and relief. "We're somewhere outside your magic country... Oz. Oh, it's terrible! What are we going to do? I've been here for days! but I can't budge an inch. People say one of the doorways into the country is about thirty yards over that way. But I can't get to it! I'm sure, if someone only knew... that I'm here representing my dad—I mean, after all, the President of the United States...!" She broke off and wept distraughtly.

"Yes, of course," said Dorothy shortly, herself over her crying jag and prepared to deal efficiently. "Wait a second." She seized Najeeb's hand in a vice-like grip and wished on the Belt again willing it to deliver the two of them into the presence of the fairy ruler of Oz.

Ozma had strolled, puzzled, back to the orangery. Now with a glad cry she welcomed back her long-time confidante and made the acquaintance of that chum's chum. "My poor friend!" she cried to Najeeb, "you must be famished. Do sit down immediately—" She gestured toward a glass-topped scrollwork iron table the fairy sometimes used for repotting work. Then she herself ran to the orangery door, pressed a buzzer, and when little Jellia Jamb appeared ordered up a substantial supper, which presently the Ozites enjoyed watching the president's daughter tuck into.

Meanwhile Najeeb was telling her story. "All hell—oh, forgive me!—has broken loose! You know we're at war with Russia? Yes, of course. Well, the Soviets are stopping at nothing to gain the upper hand. Their spies are everywhere! although, militarily, the armies have been at a stalemate for weeks... somewhere up around Nome, Alaska, I believe." At mention of that name Dorothy had incongruously to think again of the former

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owner of her Belt, which she still had on.

"The terrifying part,' Ms Koxden vent on, "is that the spies seem to be invisible!"

She allowed a moment for that startling intelligence to sink in. "Tons of top-secret documents, plans, code lists, correspondence, disappear nightly from government offices everywhere. Dad's files are rifled regularly. Finally one night lately he decided to stay in the Oval Office over night. He *saw* filing cabinets open and shut by themselves! He was terrified. But Daddy's spunky. He stayed on. He even tried shutting drawers and doors when they opened that way. He found himself having a tug-of-war with ghosts! as he called them. But the final indignity was not yet. A moment after the last cupboard slammed shut—for the night, apparently—something invisible tweaked Dad's nose!"

"He phoned me in New York. He was quite out of himself. 'Your friend!' he babbled. 'That girl who claims to work magic. Where is she? Doctor—er, Choggolak—wasn't that her name? Can you get hold of her for me?'"

"'But, Dad,' I cried, 'she's gone back to Oz—ages ago!'"

"'You really believe that?'"

"'Of course I do. And so do you—now!'"

"'Okay, Nadge'—he calls me 'Nadge', you know—'if it's not ghosts it's gotta be magic. How do we fight it? If we could get hold of your friend—'"

"'I'll don't see how we can do that,' said I, 'without going to Oz ourselves.'"

"'Yourself,' said Dad. 'Didn't I read in the papers about some woman in California making a mint by claiming to send people to Oz?'"

"'That awful Monique!' I exclaimed. 'Still there's no reason not to believe she's doing what she claims.'"

"'I want you to see her,' instructed Dad. 'You willing? Get her to send you to Oz—if she can—and get—what's her name: Dorothy—back here to deal with these invisible spies.'"

"'No way!'" said Dorothy impulsively. It must be admitted that Ozma looked at her friend understandingly.

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“Oh!” near-shrieked Najeeb. “Have I gone through this... ghastliness for nothing? ... If you knew!: packed in amongst those wailing, pushing, starving people. Why, we could hardly draw breath in that horrible air—and not a bathroom around anywhere. It was hideous. And now you’re not going to help?”

The two Ozite girls looked solemn. “Dear Ms Koxden,” said Ozma gravely, “we’d do anything to be useful, in a constructive way, to people in the outside world. But to choose up sides in a world war? Oz? To employ an Americanism; You gotta be kidding.’

The president’s daughter broke down again, shoved away her dishes, laid her head on her arms, and wept.

Then, presently, she raised her tear-streaked face and said; “If Dad—if the President—came here himself to make a personal plea—”

“Of course I should be very pleased to meet the head of state,” vouchsafed Ozma. “But as for making Oz magic available to fight war—or to score off political rivals, if one wishes to put a less militaristic name to it—I feel quite certain I shall never want to lend my authority to any such undertaking.”

Ms Koxden employed her handkerchief, then spoke. “But you will see Dad?” she asked hesitantly.

“I shall be very pleased,” said Ozma.

## C H A P T E R   F I F T Y - T H R E E

The dome over Oz was complete and final. It was magic for fighting magic. Not only could the poisons in the atmosphere not get through into the enchanted land to blacken and corrupt. Nothing could come through by magic means either. (Yet the sun, what there was of it, and the rain and the wind [carefully filtered] could enter at liberty.)

Even when Dorothy, not even; stopping to think of that aspect, wished herself to the side

of her American friend it happened by means of a delivery first to the door in the dome wall, which the girl walked through, and then, with the Belt, wished herself on the remaining thirty or forty yards through the packed mob. Then the same thing in reverse as they returned.

Now that Ozma awaited a state visit something of the same sort must take place. First there were a few preparations to be made. The queen went to get into a rather severe stateswoman's reception dress. She also did not omit to put on her traveling crown. Might as well look identifiably regal while she was at it. Then her wand; mustn't forget that. And, oh, yes; Ozma herself had never been, in latter days, to look on the horrid scene but, remembering how Stygianly dark Dorothy had reported it was outside the Dome, the Girl Ruler picked up her pocket torch.



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For some reason, she always used the British expression, rather than “flashlight” as Dorothy said; no doubt she thought it sounded less unromantic.

Within the realm of magic all materials are equally available and cheap, so when Sorceress Glinda raised the great protective Dome over Oz she made the doors of gold. Doors there after all had to be. For one thing, it would be unbearable for the Ozites to feel that they lived, however luxuriously and free, inside a cage. There had to be ways out, even if no one could imagine ever wanting to go into the smog-blackened popolluted warring world outside. At the same time, there had to be a way to get in, for just such occasions as the present. There were twenty-four doors to Oz.

Dorothy’s ‘intestinal’ feeling what Oz was east of America was in fact wrong. Odd that she should feel that way because of course the very first time she went to the magic country she landed in the far eastern end of the eastern Munchkin country; ergo, Oz lies west of America. There was never a suggestion that Dorothy’s prairie house had flown across the whole of Oz before descending.

Hence it was to one of the great golden gates on the far side of the Munchkin land that the three young women now magically made their way. Ozma signified their intention of going outside to the attendant Wheeler; representatives of the various weird constituent countries of Oz had been chosen as honorary doormen at the twenty-four gates.

As the Wheeler fumbled for the golden key at his waist the little fairy explained: “We’ll just be a few minutes. We’re going to fetch someone.” And then the door was opened wide and they were all outside.

I don’t know what Ozma expected. The others had told her it was dark out there (well, it was evening), what with the impenetrable smog. They had also not failed to mention that there was one and another person to be seen outside the gates of Oz. Even so, when by the light of her ‘torch’ Ozma saw the solid wall of humanity with haggard faces and bedraggled

## THE TEN WOODMEN OF OZ

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garments standing there in the dark and looking so despairingly at the opening door, she burst into gasping sobs.

"Oh, how dreadful," she cried. "How terribly dreadful... Oh, be prompt, ladies! Fetch the President back quickly. I don't know how much of this I can stand." It was understood that Dorothy was going along with Ms Koxden, partly as moral support but also to operate) the Magic Belt.

The two departing girls looked at each other anxiously but Ozma waved them on with a royal gesture. They joined hands and disappeared.

Ozma just stood there, crying. The Wheeler didn't know which way to turn. He daren't address royalty without a signal to do so. He didn't even have a handkerchief to offer the weeping queen. He just coasted nervously back and forth on his toy-wagon wheels. Ozma cried on.

The mob outside the gate continued to teem. Curiously nobody ventured to offer all impertinence to the delicate little princess and shoulder past her into the promised land. But they did do something. There was an extra movement among the shifting wriggling crowd and a young child was shoved forward from among the legs of older standers-by. His face was dirty, from the long sojourn in the filthy choking air with no access to a washroom, but he had big eyes (wet) and a lot of curly hair.

The child made his way the couple of steps to Ozma. He had no hat (funny how hats, even when needed, had gone totally out of fashion!) but if he had had it would have been in his hand. "Please, ma'm," he said. "Can I come in?"

"Of course, darling!" said the fairy queen without even thinking twice.

The child smiled wonderfully and passed within the gate of gold. At that children shot forward from all directions out of the vast throng and clustered about the girl ruler, plucking at her skirts. She waved them all through.

That started a stampede. Adults no longer held back and in their efforts to be first, to get through into heaven while the brief chance was there, they stormed the gate, no longer taking the

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slightest heed of Ozma, who was knocked down for her pains when she didn't get out of the way.

Such was the scene when President Koxden and his entourage, with Dorothy Choggolak and Miss Koxden, arrived. The Kansas princess, no sentimentalist, instantly used the Magic Belt to freeze the mob (not icily, to be sure) in its tracks while it could be sorted out what ought to be done.

Queen Ozma was scrabbling for her dropped wand as President Koxden hastened forward to assist her to her feet. The famous meeting of the two heads of state took place amidst rather awkward circumstances. In those few minutes while the envoys had been out in the outer world collecting the president that thing had happened which made the great leader's visit virtually irrelevant. Ozma (especially with no Glinda there to guide her) had completely lost interest in making magic available to the world as a weapon against pollution. Oz had its own and absolute depollutant now and had resigned itself to letting the outer world stew in its own dirty juice. But the refugee problem exercised all soft-hearted souls in the magic land and Ozma's heart was the softest.

While the others stood around, looking at each other uncertainly, even worriedly, the little fairy ruler kept waving her flashlight, motioning the streaming crowd to file—albeit in orderly fashion—on into Oz. "Give me your tired, your poor," she cried, "your huddled masses yearning to breathe free! I lift my lamp beside the golden door."

## C H A P T E R   F I F T Y - F O U R

Queen Glinda *almost* stamped her foot in annoyance.

“Now see what you’ve done, your grace!” she said to fellow-Queen Ozma as they stood behind the window-doors looking out on the presentation balcony and across to the big park opposite the Palace of Magic. There a vast tent town spread, a city within a city. “All the amenity of Oz is gone!” complained the good witch. “Where before, with the modest population, there was plenty of room for other, better, things, like charm and leisure, freedom from care, full employment - if one wanted it—adventure, romance, fun!, now there’s just people. I can hardly believe your’re satisfied...?”

“Oh, Glinda don’t scold,” pleaded the sad-eyed little fairy. “I had to do it. To close off Oz against the children of the world? I simply hadn’t the heart for that.” She was near to tears again, as indeed she had been ever since her shocking realization at the Munchkin Gate.

“Well, well,” muttered Glinda, trying to be mollified. “It speaks well of that heart—if not of your brain. Only now Oz is just as awful as everywhere else. Had you thought of that? What advantage have all these people now in coming to this country? An amenity is only an amenity, you know, as long as it remains theoretical: something that one can aspire to enjoy but not that

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everyone in the world does enjoy. As soon as they attempt that it becomes a demandable 'right' and savorless, or disappears completely. You've turned Oz from a land of Might-Have-Been into a land of *Is*: a place just like everywhere else—and dreadful."

"I know, dear. I know. Believe me, I've thought of nothing else for weeks now. I haven't been getting much sleep. But in the sleepless watches of the night I've thought of something; there's just a chance - but here, in a magic land, a pretty good one—that would solve everything.

"And what is that, your grace?"

"I'll need your help, Glinda. But you're so gifted. You raised this mighty dome over Oz. What I propose is no more... magnitudinous." The fairy smiled wanly. "Afterwards, of course, everything will be much *less* magnitudinous."

"My curiosity is fully aroused, Ozma. Do tell," urged the southern sorceress with an indulgent if ironical look.

"It's what the great outer world must come to in time, if they are never going to stop their vast and indiscriminate birth-giving.

Indeed, didn't I read that experiments are being carried on now in America?; they've flown the entire pigmy population of Africa to the New World to use in their teat-tube parenthood campaign; producing a whole new generation only half the size of former ones.

"We can do the same, only on a far vaster scale."

"You mean—?"

"Yes. With magic we could reduce everyone in Oz to a size—oh, say one centimeter high. Then there'd be abundant room for all of us. And think of the abundance of everything else! The whole palace here could dine to repletion on a single strawberry."

Glinda's quick mind was busy with all the implications. "You'd have to reduce all other moving life on the same scale," she predicted. "No use having ordinary house-flies to contend with that are like vast dragons bigger than a man."

"No. I'd thought of that. But not plant life; otherwise you'd

## THE TEN WOODMEN OF OZ

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lose the advantage of the great relative abundance of food, and all the other benefits we have of plants."

"Planning such a move would take months," the witch warned. "Actually, the magic involved is quite simple. With the implements I always have with me, reinforced perhaps by your use of your—well, Dorothy's—Magic Belt, I could probably do the task while we waited. But—"

"Oh, Glinda, let's do!" cried Ozma all aflame. "Why plan? People would only come up with a thousand objections. On the other hand, learning to cope with the suddenly and so drastically altered circumstances of life would provide instant employment for everyone in Oz." The Girl Ruler motioned to the scores of idlers across the street who lounged against trees, smoking cigarettes—if not worse—or shying pebbles at the palace windows, just for fun.

"Are you serious, Your Majesty?" asked Glinda wondering, but not, in her heart, averse.

"Yes! Oh, come, let's do it right away, before we have time to stop and lose our courage." The fairy princess was already on her way out of the salon. Glinda followed along quizzically as Ozma led the way along the hall to the Library, where the belt was stored. On the way Glinda picked up her red witch's-satchel from a hall table.

In the big library room furnished in charming Louis XV style, Ozma flicked the light switch at the doorpost. "In just a few minutes," remarked Glinda whimsically, "that's not going to be so easy."

"Never mind," urged Ozma as whimsically. "For the really big tasks, like getting across a door sill or turning on a light, we'll still have the use of magic."

The princess pulled open the drawer of a table where the Magic Belt was kept, while Glinda put down her bag on a chair and rummaged within. Then the two great adepts of magic, one a fairy, the other a witch, invoked the aid of their powerful implements of enchantment.

"Let every living moving creature in Oz be reduced to one

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one-hundredth of its normal size," was the burden of their wish.

In an instant, without a sound, the work was done.

Two tiny figures peered out wonderingly round the vast foot of a rococo library chair.

Lund

17 August 1986 - 13 March 1987