

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

Despite their great and grave concerns the travelers managed to have rather a nice time as they bowled along their way. Henry, Wam, and Vergrodius were exchanging reminiscences on the front seat, which was quite big enough for three, if one was only an outsize frog.

In the back of the wagon sat Dorothy Gale and Zippiochoggolak Wammuppirovocuckson (to give him is full name—if one must). They were getting acquainted at top speed. Little Dorothy could not get over the idea that this likeable lad was the swift Messenger who had brought the Good Witch of the North to her assistance just when she needed it most. And what was her terror and delight to learn that Zip had been asleep in the Deadly Poppy field at the same time as herself.

“But, oh!” she mourned, “to think of all the time we’ve wasted, when we might have been such friends,” and here she was echoing thoughts Zip himself had just been having. Contrary to received opinion, Princess Dorothy was not only and exclusively susceptible to friendship with young persons of her own sex.

“It’s not too late to start,” suggested Zip.

“Let’s,” said Dorothy, and they told each other the story of their lives.

"Uncle's your father's brother then?" enquired the Lad of Light.

"Yes," said the Princess—a bit shortly, Zip thought. "And Auntie Em's my mother's sister." This information she revealed with somewhat more of pleased vivacity.

The revelation had the usual effect. "Great orks!" cried Zip. "Sisters married brothers; what an amazing thing! How wonderful. But why hasn't everyone heard of this charming coincidence long since?"

"Oh," said Dorothy, again shortly, "it isn't all that charming. I'm afraid it was all rather spoiled a bit. We've never liked talking about it in the family. But now... well, I think, perhaps, you ought to know." She looked at Zippiochoggolak almost pleadingly.

"Don't tell me if you'd rather not," said the boy feelingly.

"No, it's all right," pursued Dorothy. "It's no good, in the long run, covering up the truth. You ought to know what kind of a family you—" but here she broke off suddenly and blushed.

Zip took the blush for the highest compliment and replied, "Nothing you could tell me would change my admiration for one who..." and here he too fell silent and flushed a gorgeous rose pink that neatly complimented the flower in his cap.

"Well," said Dorothy. "Mother was an angel; Aunt Em has told me. Her name was Marie; but she died young. There were three other sisters too. Their names were—"

"But your father?" interrupted Zip. His fellowship with his own father, interrupted though it might be for years, was so splendid that he was inspired to find out all he could about Dorothy's father.

But, "Oh, dear," sighed the princess. "Well, all right... I'm going to present this to you as something truly daring and you tell me what you think of it."

"Okay."

It doesn't at all fit in with the goody-goodness of Oz. It smacks of all the greed and cruelty of the great world—and

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makes me glad I escaped such a setting. I've been awfully lucky, you know."

Zip made a polite noise and waited expectantly.

Dorothy told the tale perfunctorily. One can't blame her. It wasn't very nice. "Uncle Henry and Aunt Em," she recounted bluntly, with little regard for the style, "kept me for my widowed father. I was little more than a baby then. My father soon married—to the richest woman in Topeka. Unfortunately she was not a pleasant person and could not stand to have me around. So Uncle Henry and Aunt Em continued to care for me. Even this was not enough for wife number two. She wanted no reminder whatever of Mother around.

"With her help my father became president of one of the richest and most powerful banks in Topeka—"

Zip might have guessed but he didn't actually have a clue about Topeka, so he asked. Dorothy filled him in on background and told about the hard times in Kansas for agriculture in general and for her Uncle Henry in particular. Then she went on:

"My father—*his* name was Lewis; I'm afraid it's of one of my favorites—fell more and more under stepmother's influence. It was he, my own father—Uncle Henry's brother!—who foreclosed the mortgage on Uncle's farm. So you can see that makes his name one not to be mentioned around Uncle Henry and Aunt Em, especially Uncle Henry."

We must hope that the long-suffering old farmer on the front seat was not overhearing Dorothy's quietly, almost secretly, related confession. "It's not a very nice heritage, is it?" said the little girl and wiped away a furtive tear.

"But, Princess Dorothy dear," exclaimed Zip, much under the impression, "it's nothing to do with *you*. Your behavior could never be influenced by anything your father did."

"No. I suppose not." Dorothy allowed herself to be comforted, and the two of them companionably ignored all the teaching of Freud.

Merrily—well, almost—they rolled along over the purple

fields in April.

Purple?

Yes, well, you see, when, at his palace, the Emperor of the Winkies happened to mention, en passant, that Lucinda, the Maid of Light, had, at the break-up of PARPO, been invited by the Good Witch of the North to go and stay with her for a bit at her cottage near the Amethyst City, and the Maid of Light, bored, it seemed, with the uneventful life at her own people's Castle of Light, had consented with alacrity, Lucinda's husband, the necromancer Wam, suddenly readjusted *his* sights as to what he preferred to do next.

"My old colleague Tattypoo!" he exclaimed. "Well, it figures. The two ladies saw something of each other in the days when the Good Witch and I worked so closely together. I'd love to see Tat again, myself. When I gave up the use of magic—but she continued—our ways divided. It's been ages since we last met. Do you suppose...?"

"What?" said Nick Chopper. He was taking the part of master of ceremonies at the conference in the conservatory.

"Well," went on Wam, "all we really need is the assistance of *one* competent magic-worker for the solution of our various problems. What if we spared Queen Ozma and the Wizard Oz and Sorceress Glinda the bother of dealing with our claims and went on to Witch Tattypoo's place, where maybe she would be willing to do one little additional bit of hexing and, while she's got her on the scene, make Zip's mum resigned to living with us again?"

All his friends agreed it was a pleasing and economical plan and fell in with it at once.

"Dear Nick," said Dorothy, "our little private visit we planned is quickly over. You do see that I must be with Uncle as he goes to save Aunt Em? But I'll come again soon, I promise ... maybe sooner than we think," but what she had in mind when she added that I really couldn't say.

Thus it was that they were bowling along the purple rather than yellow or green ones. The Amethyst City lay—actually, still

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lies—about at dead center of the land of the Gillikins and functioned as a sort of ‘capital’ of that land, inasmuch as the Good Witch of the North was regent of the country and her modest cottage stood about six miles out of town up a mountain-side to the south-east. The friends decided to stop at the Amethyst City for the night, so as to be fresh for the interview on the morrow.

In the evening Zip and Dorothy left the Amethyst Garden Hotel for a walk, just the two of them, through the violet streets of the town. This was “city” only in the old European sense and, in under (but just right) -populated Oz, it had about nineteen thousand inhabitants. The lilacs were in bloom (they always are in Gillikinland) and the sight and the scent were delightful. The paths were bordered with violets and pansies, crocus and tulips. The whole city was quite a wonderland of purple blossom. Most of its area seemed to be given over to large botanical gardens and it was in one of these that the couple strolled.

Their private histories related, the boy and girl had gone on to talk of the future. “I have a dream for Oz,” confessed Dorothy. “It’s only a small dream, since everything here is so nearly perfect already...”

“What is your dream, your grace?” said Zip archaically. He liked sometimes to talk formally and stagily. “I pray you, tell it me.”

“I’d like to see more tolerance in Oz,” stated the princess. “All these tiny crackpot countries one has visited in the past—and no doubt will in future: the people there always have only one idea: to make over any chance visitors as much as possible in the inhabitants’ own image. It seems so ludicrous, thinking back on it—or reading about it. But in fact such behavior is extremely true to human nature. Also out in the great world it is everybody’s conviction that no peoples can ever *really* be happy until they’re made over to conform with one’s own prejudices.

“That’s why members of religious groups, especially Christians, go around the world trying to convert everybody. Proponents of various political isms try to force other groups—or, preferably, whole nations—to adopt those isms. The Industrial West can’t be convinced the backward rural countries can be happy

until industrialized... The awful be-like-me! feeling extends even to emigration to Oz! People outside are horrified at the idea of anyone's coming here who isn't a white 'Anglo-Saxon' Christian. Just for fun I'd like to see a Jewish Negro—with Indian blood—turn up here one day."

Zip wasn't horrified. He said, "So would I."

"Of course," the Princess hastened to amend, "we would probably want to exclude deviants and unmarried mothers. I guess we wouldn't want just *everybody* to think they could come here—no matter how harmless they might be."

Zip was silent at that. Perhaps the princess, too, realized how deeply her talk would alienate some people if they heard it. It was far too grown-up, intellectual, and controversial to be acceptable, or even credible, in a Princess of Oz. Abruptly she changed the subject. "What's that?" she said. Zip had been rolling from hand to hand a particularly large and fine amethyst he had picked up under a huckleberry bush. "Oh, I meant it for you!" he exclaimed, and handed it to the pleased

Dorothy. "It's just a piece of gravel, but I thought it might look nice on you—if you had it polished and set."

Yes, Dorothy thought so too: set in a ring.



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“Now then,” said the Good Witch of the North, “let’s get on with it! Which of these spells do you want revoked first?”

Actually Tattypoo hated working magic. She didn’t know why she bothered to do it, but then she was a full-fledged witch and she supposed she had to. Certainly she was very good at it. Always though, she did it as quickly and perfunctorily as possible and then got back to her real interests: spinning, weaving, and making preserves.

“Oh, please! please!” croaked the King of the Green Mountain in answer to the witch’s question. “Lorna first! She’s in agony, poor girl. The rest of us can wait.” This says something, no doubt, about the sincerity of the king’s devotion, for, as we know, he had been struggling and yearning to be released from his own enchantment for twenty-three years now.

“Lorna,” said Tattypoo thoughtfully. “That’ll be the tree sprite, second class, that you mentoned. Pity you couldn’t have brought along more of these people who want disenchanting,” she huffed. “It’s always a good deal easier to disenchant somebody in situ.”

“Oh, but she can be here in minutes!” protested Vergrodius. “Can’t she, fellows?” He turned for reassurance to Wammuppirovocuck and Henry Gale.

"Quite so," agreed Wam. "We just have to send for her. You remember our method, Madam Tattypoo..."

This was not a question, for the old-time teamwork of the witch and the necromancer had been but moments earlier brought forcefully to the minds of them both. It was with considerable surprise that the good witch had gone to her door that morning and opened it to find that he who knocked was that young messenger of light whom she had sent off to carry most vital dispatches twelve years ago, and who had never been seen since.

"Nip!" she cried.

"Zip," said the boy diffidently.

"That's right, 'Zip'! Where on earth did you spring from? *and* your dad. Zam! It's been ages!" "Wam," said Wam. "Yes, far too long, ma'm. I'm delighted to see you again."

"*And* Dorothy! As I live and breathe. Why, gracious me, the last time I saw you was—yesterday at PARPO!"

Dorothy gave a little silver trill of laughter as she shook hands. The old lady was having her joke. During the conference the two had reminisced at length about their last previous meeting: the time the young newcomer to Oz was just starting off to look for Oz, the Great and Terrible, taking with her the blessing of the good northern witch who now was saying: "—and the old gentleman? don't believe we've met..."

Now Dorothy had supposed that her uncle was so famous a celebrity in his own right that everyone of importance in Oz must know him by sight. Or was this another of the old party's gags? She determined to play it cool and performed the introductions demurely.

"Pleased to meet you," said Uncle politely. "Mrs. Tattypoo, can I take this chance to thank you for all you did in setting my niece on the straight and narrow—"

"Oh, never mind that!" interrupted the Good Witch jovially. "Glad to do it. And this, I suppose," she went on, addressing King Vergrodius, "is the celebrated Frogman of Oz? I've heard of *you*."

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"Frog man?" put in Dorothy. "Why, no, he's a frog king, but just temporarily he's not a man. We were hoping you—"

"What now?!" broke in Tattypoo again. The party had by now stepped inside the witch's hut and Tattypoo, bringing up the rear, was considerably mystified to see the wizard Wam looking intently out a window into the back garden and Zip staring up the stairs.

Father and son started and then turned to the witch apologetically. "We expected to find our well-beloved wife—and mother—here," explained Wammuppirovocuck. "They told us at Winkiezia that she had returned here with you, ma'm."

"Who's that?" demanded their hostess. "Oh, Lucinda. the Maid of Light! is that the one? Is *she* your mother?—or—sorry! that would be 'wife' in your case. Yes, of course she's your wife; I remember now. Well, no, *she's* not here—"

"Not here?!" cried young Zip all woesbegone. "But Emperor Nick said for sure—"

"Oh, she WAS here. But she's so popular! She had any number of invitations and she left earlier this morning to go on to the court of Kimbaloo—and on from there to—oh, I've got the list somewhere."

This was a sad blow to Wam and son but there seemed no help for it. The two fellows each gave a big sigh and then went on to state their other purposes to the Witch of the North and explain to her how vital to them her help was.

"To cases then," said Tattypoo briskly. "Where is this wood—or, rather, gold—nymph you want to disenchant?"

"Actually," said Vergrodius, "hers is not so much enchantment as an embalming—or even a mummification. You see, we don't know how to get the gold off her without hurting her—"

"Or the gold, I suppose?" said the matter-of-fact witch. "Well, even if not magically caused her case would seem to need to be magically treated. You'd want the gold off in one piece, wouldn't you?, and still retaining its outlines of the shape of the woman inside?"

"I couldn't care less!" shouted Vergrodius in desperation. "I

want my *beloved* out in one piece — *and* not injured by her dreadful experience!"

"No need to raise your voice," said Tattypoo mildly. "That *was* your voice? or was it a rusty bucket-winch that spoke?"

Wam broke into the unseemly quarreling and declared, "There's just one problem. We can send Zip in a jiffy to fetch the statue, but I'm afraid he couldn't lift it on his own! I must ask for volunteers —"

"I'll go!" cried Dorothy.

"I certainly will, of course," said Uncle Henry "That's fine," said Wammuppirovocuck. "Three should do it... Well, if you're ready..? Remember us to the Emperor!"

With a casual wave of the hand the necromancer caused his son and good friends to vanish -

—only to appear in the next instant in the conservatory of the yellow tin palace.

There, in a deck chair beside the statue, sat the Emperor of the Winkies. "That was quick," he said with a smile. "I've taken all care of the poor nymph's statue, you see. Only..."

"Yes?" said the three arrivals as one.

"It's such a splendid work — of accident, that I've quite fallen in love with it! I hate to lose it from my collection."

"We may be able to do something about that, Your Resplendence," said Uncle Henry formally. "It almost seems as if the Good Witch intends, if possible, to preserve the covering layer of metal intact. I'm sure you might be given that. No one else would want it — except..."

"Lorna herself," put in Zip with a laugh. "You two will have to fight it out."

That prospect made the Tin Woodman look grave.

Some of the Emperor's metal-workers were called and the statue was detached from its pedestal. The three instant travelers each took hold of a limb or trailing drapery of the heavy figure and with cheerful wave to Nick Chopper they were off.

Witch and necromancer broke off the reminiscences in which they had indulged during the quarter-hour interval. Tattypoo

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turned to the newly delivered golden figure, saying, "Oh, I see. Yes; rather complicated. Actually, now I could wish I'd thought to have you bring along some of those Winkie metal-workers. Still, that would make for awful lot of coming and going. Never mind. Our locals are quite competent. I'll give you a note to the A.C.M.U. and you can deliver it on your way back to your hotel. This is going to take a little time..."

"A.C.M.U.?" spoke King Vergrodius.

"Mmm, Amethyst City Metallurgists' Union," elucidated the witch. "We'll have it ready for shipment when you come in the morning."

"It?" said the king.

"Why, yes: the statue. Didn't Dorothy say that the yellow emperor wanted it for his collection?"

"Oh, you!!" The turkey-sized frog would have leapt on the Good Witch of the North if he had not been forcibly restrained by the others.

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The poor Witch of the North had ended not being much of a favorite with anybody, unless it was Wam, who was used to her satirical teasing manner from of old. On their way back to the hotel they tore her a good deal to pieces, and nobody particularly looked forward to seeing her again next morning. They agreed it was tiresome to have to be beholden to someone with such a knack for belittling. Even toward Wammuppirovocuck there was a faint feeling of resentment for his having induced them to do their magic business with this sorceress instead of with the bunch at the Emerald City, who could have been counted on to banish evil spells without a lot of flack.

There was nothing for it but to gird up their loins and ride the Red Wagon back to the brown-and-purple polka-dotted hut at nine the next morning. Who should come running to the door to receive them but the restored and thriving-looking tree sprite (second class) Lorna!?, wearing an old Mother-Hubbard of Tattypoo's.

Lorna stood not upon ceremony but fell in the dust before the bushel-basket-shaped frog and began to kiss his flippers. That must have been a moment of rare ecstasy for the long-suffering monarch. He had loved and endured for twenty-three years and now at last his long vigil was going to be rewarded.

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Yet it was not as he had hoped it would be: the lovely and repentant nymph coming to him as he sat in restored glory on his throne. His generosity in requiring *her* salvation before *his* restoration was the cause of that effect. But even so this was pretty good.

Most kindly he raised her up and begged her to dry her tears. Then as the others, after brief but warm congratulations, passed within the witch's cottage, Vergrodius led his lost and found love into the grape arbor at the other end of the garden. A strange couple they made: the wan, worn (though vital-enough-looking) woman and the great glistening green frog. An illustrator might have made good play of them.

What did they talk of?

The wood nymph, still swallowing back sobs, said, "I have only one wish: to spend the rest of my life making it up to you. May I be allowed to, Your Majesty?"

King Vergrodius said: "I have only one wish: to be worthy of your love."

That was the end of the frog king's eight minutes of bliss. The tree sprite replied, "My king, you must forgive me. I dedicate my life to you. But in shame and expiation. It is not love... I am so very sorry. Here she gasped and sobbed afresh.

That was a terrible moment for the Green Mountain king. What, oh, what was he, were they, to do now? Wear out their lives in unrequited yearnings and self-sacrifice? The nymph did not value the king's love—and he did not want anyone abasing herself without love—or with it, for that matter.

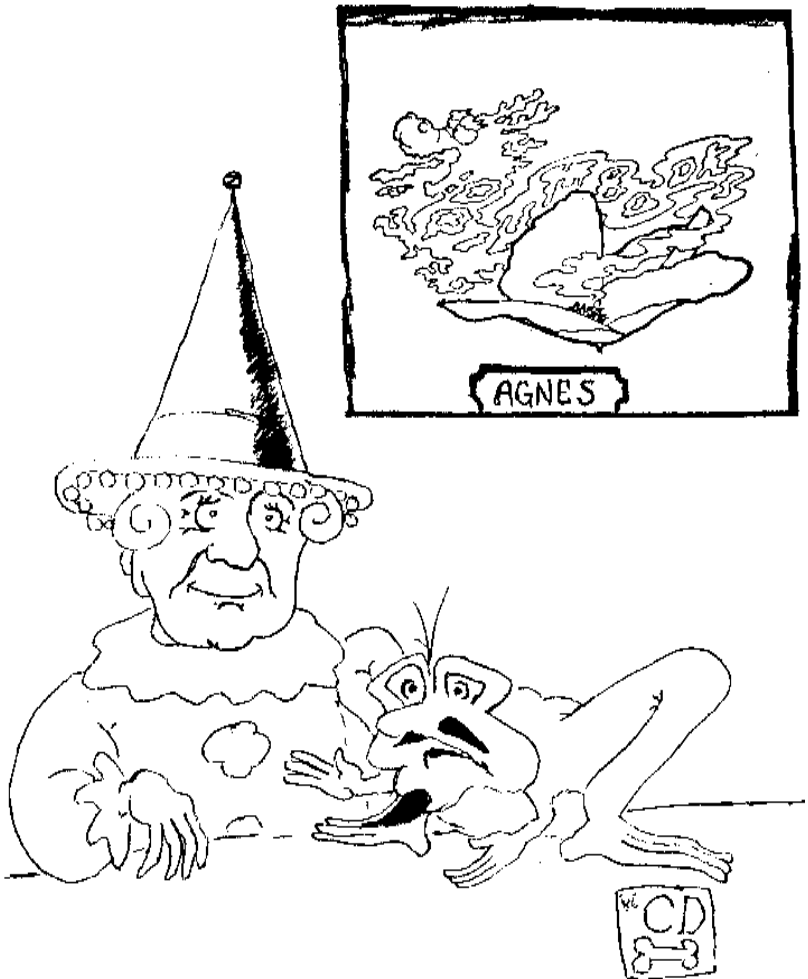
It was a sad couple that slowly made its way back to Tattypoo's house. Both of them were miserable and it would have been hard to say which was more so.

The other adventurers, meanwhile, did not pay much heed. *They* were all involved in a lively dispute as to the next item on the agenda. Wam and Zip were insisting that the restoration of Mrs. Emily Gale to her customary clothes and right mind claimed the very top priority, while Henry Gale and his niece, not to be outdone in gallantry, were adamantly refusing to budge an inch

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in the direction of the Dorothy's House National Monument before Wam's wife and Zip's mother was returned to the bosom of her family. To complicate matters, the Good Witch of the North was tiresomely demanding to go where the trouble was instead of once more having it brought to her.

"Why, where would we be now?" she inquired, "if I'd just sat around here on that Saturday morning long ago instead of going to the land of the Munchkins to see for myself? If I could go there once, I guess I can go there again. That's where Lucinda's supposed to be today: in the Sapphire City. (*I must find that list.*)"



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When Vergrodius and Lorna walked in, the couple tried to dissemble their distress and pretend to take an interest in the discussion. “I earnestly beseech your graces all,” spoke up the wood nymph, to take my master, King Vergrodius’, problem to first consideration. He has so nobly forsworn his opportunity — for *my* sake. I can do no less than plead for his.”

This was the first opportunity the others had had to notice what a change had come over the nymph since her ordeal by fiery gold. They were impressed. Gone, it seemed, were the coarse language and vulgar outlook. They all felt a little spark of cheer: *something* was going right.

They had not long to meditate on that, however. The great green frog was hopping up and down in a transport of self-denial and croaking, “No!! I won’t hear of it! It’s out of the question. For my part everyone else may come first, for I have found already my heart’s desire: my dear — if not own — Lorna.”

Yet when they asked him whom he preferred to rescue next, he confused the issue by hemming and hawing, not wanting to seem to prefer the happiness of any of his new friends over that of the others. Finally he bethought him to plump (neutrally) for “The fat prince! He has suffered long and loudly —”

“No,” declared the wizard Wam with emphasis. “The Prince of Wates waits! A little bit longer on his current diet” (which was no diet) “won’t harm him at all.”

How then to decide?

“We could flip a coin,” suggested Uncle Henry, recalling old Kansas ways of settling fifty-fifty questions.

That, of course, was virtually impossible in Oz. No one had with him any of the only known coins in the kingdom, the famous green play pennies of the Emerald City. “What can we flip?” pondered their hostess, looking doubtfully about her at pot lids and a couple of leftover breakfast pancakes.

“Dorothy, my dear.” spoke Wam. “That bit of amethyst you’ve taken to playing with: it would do nicely. It’s flattish on two sides... It’s rather a fine one, by the way. It has magical properties, did you know?”

Dorothy was thrilled—and more than ever pleased with her young friend's gift. But she did not have long to be delighted before the witch said, "Give it here then. Now: heads we save Mrs. Henry first, tails we go after Mrs. Wam." She pointed out to her clients which side of the gem would be which.

High flashed the grape-colored jewel through the lavender air and down it came to rest in the good witch's dexterous hand which, after one glance, she covered with the other. "Heads!" she announced. "Now go we to determine who they shall be that straight shall post to Munchkinland."

This paraphrase of a classical allusion confounded them all for a moment. Then Dorothy found her voice and said, "'Post'? I'm sure none of us wants to wait to be mailed there!"

"No-no, of course not." Tattypoo apologized hastily for her literary aberration. "To save further shuttling back and forth I propose that we all ride to the Gale homestead in the Red Wagon. It's only an hour away."

The idea took them all by surprise, yet after all they couldn't see any disadvantage in it. It would indeed save their having to come back for the Sawhorse later.

"But stay!" said Uncle Henry. "We're too many by now. Seven of us is going to be a squeeze. And don't forget there's no springs in that wagon to speak of..."

"We could turn it into a char-a-banc, I suppose," said Wam, though a little dubiously.

"No, wait! I've got a splendid idea," declared Tattypoo. "Even elegant—for it will satisfy any who may not be so glad at how the gem-flipping turned out. You, Wam, shall *send* me to the Sapphire City. I'm pretty sure that's where Lucinda was due to turn up today. We'll rendezvous with you later at the Gale house."

Nor did anyone have anything to object to that proposal. Nay, more: it was popular, for immediately Zip was clamoring to be allowed to go along and be in at the long-longed-for encounter with his mother. Princess Dorothy then joined her pleas to his: she wanted to be included in another 'sending', having

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found her first one quite exhilarating.

So it was done. The load in the wagon was now lightened considerably and the four passengers set out at once. Wam's last act before he joined Henry Gale on the front seat was to wave his hand dispatchingly at the old witch and the two children in the doorway of the violet-and-gingerbread hut. In a moment all was silent and deserted at the home of Tattypoo. Who could have guessed it would be years before she saw that home again?

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Lucinda, the Lady of Light, had just sat down to her elevenses in the morning room of the Sapphire Palace. “Mother!” cried Zippiochoggolak and ran across the blue spruce parquetry to fling his head in her lap.

Lucinda gave a great cry and burst into tears, clutching the boy to her as if she meant never to let go.

Tattypoo and Dorothy turned away, not to intrude on the touching scene, and spoke to King Cheeriobed, who had stumbled to his feet, dropping his napkin and scattering blueberry bismarcks in every direction. The bluehounds under the table scabbled to their feet and devoured the muffins that landed on the floor.

The flustered and blushing king was staring at Tattypoo as if he’d seen her before—as he had, of course—but that is another story. The king certainly hadn’t looked to see anyone arrive now in this fashion. “How—? Who—? Why...?” he bumbled.

“By magic. To fetch Lucinda. She’s wanted,” calmly replied the Witch of the North and gave the king her hand to shake or kiss or stuff in his pocket or whatever else the silly old duffer might choose to do with it. She indicated Dorothy; then the king had to start over on what no doubt passed for him as forms of welcome.

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The Lady of Light and her Lad were over the worst of their reuniting by now. They prepared to take a composed part in the conversation. "Of course," announced the radiant light-lady quietly, "I'll be only too glad to return with you and greet your father. I'm so sorry, Your Highness, to break off what has been a delightful little visit—"

"Oh," put in Tattypoo, "there's no call to be abrupt, Madam Lucinda. We're not expected for an hour or more. Do carry on with your meal."

Indeed, with all the traveling the children had done since breakfast at the hotel, they were not averse to an early brunch themselves. They all sat down round the table and had a nice little party. Now the newcomers had time to become more aware of the presence of a third participant at the interrupted refreshment. This was a well-mannered youth who was introduced as Prince Philador. In contrast to King Cheerio, whose blustering and ineptness merely amused the sceptical Witch of the North, young Philador seemed to ingratiate himself inordinately with the old woman. They sat next to each other at table and were thick as anything, quite ignoring the others, who were on at great length about the children's many adventures of the last few days.

Time just flew. Suddenly Tattypoo looked at her watch and "Great heavens!" she cried. "They'll be sending for us any second now!" She jumped up. "Quickly, people," she commanded; "join hands now.. Not you, duffer! Oh! sorry, Your Highness," she apologized curtly to King Cheerio who seemed to be going to join the circle to be transported away. Hastily, blushing azure, the king dropped his hands and stood abashed. Tattypoo, Lucinda, Zip, and Dorothy linked hands in a magic circle and waited...

And waited. Nothing happened.

There was time for further small talk. The Lady of Light thanked the King of the Ozure Isles for his charming hospitality. Tattypoo was heard to say to Prince Philador, "I'll look into that disappearance as soon as I'm home again, I promise. Of

course it's upsetting for you! You want to find your mother again—just as this young man today so happily has found his—” She had just turned to glance at Zip, when suddenly the magic ‘took’—and King Cheerio and his son were left gaping at a deserted table.

The rendezvous point for the travelers by magic was the bluesward in front of Dorothy's (and all the Gales') old house. Sure enough! there was the Sawhorse, not even winded from his run. His four passengers were just in the act of climbing down from the red wagon.

Abruptly the little old woman Tattypoo made a low bow to Dorothy at her side and said, “You are welcome, most noble sorceress, to the land of the Munchkins!”—and then giggled delightedly.

“Why, what—!” said the startled Dorothy. “I've *been* in the land of the Munchkins for two hours... Oh, I see!” Then she too laughed most heartily.

Lucinda and Zip stood looking on in puzzlement. until Dorothy explained: “This is the spot on which I landed in Oz for the first time all those years ago. And those are the words with which the Good Witch of the North welcomed me.”

Thoroughly delighted—and quite forgetting that the witch still had in her pocket—through an oversight, of course!—the magic amethyst she, Dorothy, prized so highly—the girl put her arm through that of Tattypoo and advanced to meet her uncle and friends.

Zip and his parents were caught in the magic circle of reunion. They slipped away into the forest by the little stream and were seen no more for some time.

Meanwhile the attention of Dorothy Gale was distracted from the figures of those whom she had seen but recently to the little old farmhouse that she had not seen in a dozen years. Actually, the house had never been a particular favorite of hers. It was far too bare and crude a little dwelling ever to have made great claims on anyone's affections. Perhaps that was why she had never had curiosity to revisit it in all the years she had lived in

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Oz. If the house had become something of a national shrine it was due to *others'* interest in it, not her own. Just the same, now that she was here she looked with great fascination at the grey weathered boards, the bleached shingle roof, the faded battered door—and at the fantastic brilliance of scarlet that was almost bursting out of every window!

“Uncle dear,” she called when still some paces away, “whatever is all that red?! It’s quite amazing. I’m not altogether sure I like it. It reminds me of something—threatening...”

“It might at that, my dear,” said Uncle Henry. “It’s some of those poppies they say you fell asleep in years ago.”

“Good gracious,” said the girl. “Is it quite safe? having them in the house that way.”

“Oh, your Aunt Em said there was nothing sinister about them. They’re just ordinary poppies. And she liked the red color.”

“Where IS Auntie Em?” asked the girl wonderingly, for the hair-raising tales her uncle had told had made her expect, at the worst, a burst of gunshot, or at the best a forthright figure at the door demanding to know their business.

“She *could* have stepped out, I reckon. She did go into the woods at times ... to collect things.” “What sort of things, Uncle?”

“Oh, flowers—well, weeds, actually. And toad-stools. And then she developed an interest in amphibiology—”

“Whatever’s that?”

“Well, she seemed to be fond of toads and frogs and newts and things.”

This was very puzzling and not wholly reassuring to the young girl. It was with considerable trepidation that she led the way to the cottage door, as the others followed.

The door was shut. Dorothy knocked. She waited. The others stood in a group and waited as patiently. There came no answer. Dorothy knocked again.

“It’s rained, I see,” said Farmer Henry nervously, just to make a noise. He indicated the full tub under the rain spout.

“Mrs. Gale has been caring for her plants,” offered Tattypoo in her turn and pointed to a watering can and various pails and

fruit jars set along under the eaves to catch drips.

Still nobody replied to the knocking. "This is silly," said Dorothy and opened the door and—

But that was as far as she got. A gust of sickening rich syrup scent swept out to meet her and forced her back, gagging. How well she remembered that terrible fragrance from a day twelve years before! "How awful!" she gasped when she could get her breath.

Witch Tattypoo had sized up the situation in a trice. "Quick, people!" she cried. "The plants! Break open the windows and get them out." She herself led the way into the red-hazy atmosphere of the interior of the house.

Well might a timider soul have drawn back. The poppies in the window pots seemed to have undergone a magical transformation. They had spread outward and upward until they gave the impression of filling every available cranny of space. The in-rushing people had to thresh their way through a veritable small jungle of red and green that darkened the one room with a lurid chiaroscuro.

At first they could not even see the room's one occupant. Then when a particularly thick hedge of prickly poppy stems had been knocked aside they saw sprawled on the bed the inert figure of a woman in black.

Dorothy at the door, frantic, took one look and screamed, "Auntie Em! Oh, she's dead!", forgetting for a moment what country she was in and mistaking the figure's green complexion for the color of advanced decomposition.

"Hush, hush, my dear!" cried Uncle Henry, turning from his firefighter-type labors and taking his niece in his arms. "It may not be as bad as that. Here, folks! that'll do. Help me get my wife outside—into the open air."

Tattypoo and Lorna the nymph hurried to obey. Without the scantest ceremony they dragged the limp form of the farm-wife off the bed and out the door and laid her on the grass five yards from the house. There the pinkish fumes that still belched from the broken windows could not reach her. Dorothy sat down

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beside the unconscious woman and began to fan her with her hat for all she was worth.

For a long time nothing happened—except that Wammuppirovocuck and his family, alarmed by the uproar, came hurrying out of the woods. The Witch of the North was beginning to wonder if the woman had indeed been destroyed, if not killed, by what must have been a week's concentrated and enclosed in-breathing of the deadly perfume. The others had done what they could toward ridding the little house of its frightful miasma and already no further sight or scent of the opium vapors were to be remarked.

King Vergrodius had stayed in the rear as the burst of rescue activity convulsed the house but now he too drew near and all the friends stood around in a circle to watch and wait for what beneficent effect fresh air might have. Dorothy was saying, "It took me a long time to wake up and I'd only been amongst the flowers a few minutes," when—actually rather remarkably early—one of Aunt Em's green eyelids gave a flutter.

That inspired them all with renewed hope. The poor woman was *not* dead—or even destroyed! Now it was just a case of waiting out her recovery patiently.

When the house had aired completely the women members of the expedition ventured in again to find if there was anything that might be served up as a late lunch. Nothing edible was found except a basket of drying mushrooms and, on the cupboard counter, a plate of half-consumed frogs' legs. These latter had, alas, not been cooked. Quickly the ladies returned outdoors. The meal, such as it was, ended in consisting of a few raw bismarcks from the bush behind the house.

It must have been at about seven o'clock that evening that, after an exaggerated period of letting nature take its course, the adventurers were rewarded by Mrs. Gale's giving a very deep sigh and returning to consciousness. By then the watchers, even the anxious Henry Gale and his niece, had grown bored with sitting around waiting while Em slept (no amount of shaking served to wake her) and had wandered off.

One or two remained, of course, always on duty beside the unconscious figure. Lorna and King Vergrodius were thus serving when the awakening took place. Tattypoo at that time was at the stove in the Gale house cooking up a ragout of tasty ingredients she had found in fields and woods nearby and even (shh!) a fish taken from the brook close at hand. Uncle Henry and Dorothy were seated companionably on a log against a wistaria tangle at the edge of the glade, reading some old letters they had found in the house. And Wammuppirovocuck's reunited family had gone for another walk in the woods.

"Gol darn!! what the freak's been goin' on?!" were the first words the relieved vigil-keepers heard from the black-clad Emily as she raised herself on her elbows and gazed about the lawn.

What joy! The other Gales dropped their letters and Tattypoo stuck her head out the door, prepared to hasten nigh. Her long sleep seemed to have refreshed the green-skinned Em enormously. Quickly she scrambled to her feet and glanced around just as her husband and niece hurried up. "Oh, for crap's sake!" she yelled enthusiastically. "You again!" (This was directed at Henry.) "Can't I get you out of my hair? And that tiresome girl! Where did *you* spring from? Come to aid and abet the old codger in keeping me down, I'll bet!"

Henry and Dorothy in hurt horror stopped in their tracks. They'd been more or less prepared for bad language but this was *too* painful. Emily was by no means finished spewing witchy—or even bitchy—venom. She spied witch Tattypoo half hesitating in the doorway of the house and called out to her jauntily, "Who gave *you* permission, you ugly old frump, to invade my kitchen?! Get your rear out of there! but pronto!"

Lastly her gaze fell on Lorna, the tree sprite, and King Vergrodius, who were retreating hastily. "Who might *you* be, my pretty?" screeched Em insinuatingly at the alarmed woman. "You look like a tart so I don't know how you ever got into this august company. And who's your familiar?": she launched a shaft at the away-hopping king.

This latter apparition set the witch woman's thoughts off on

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another tack: “Hot ziggetty! that reminds me: I feel like I haven’t eaten in a week.” (That’s right. She hadn’t.) “And right there’s a meal—king-size—tryin’ to get away!” With no further ado Emily Gale took three running bounds and a flying leap to launch herself on the back of the terrified outsize frog.

Instant and violent confusion ensued. Nymph Lorna threw herself upon Aunt Em to try to drag her away from her lover. At Em’s fighting words the Witch of the North had run from the house door and she too hurled herself into the fray. Uncle Henry rushed in to attempt to separate the warring females. And Dorothy -

What did Dorothy do in the emergency? Why, just what she had done once before, instinctively, when she got angry enough. It was a tried and true old Kansas recipe for breaking up a cat-and-dog (or frog?) fight. She stepped to the wall of the house under the eaves and seized up a pail of water. Then she ran to the free-for-all in the middle of the bluesward and with perfect control (though without *really* considering what she was doing) dashed the gallon of liquid full over the quarreling quintet.

The results were impressive.

In the first place the fight stopped. Uncle Henry and Nymph Lorna got to their feet, shaking loose water drops from themselves and garments. As for King Vergrodius, he positively delighted in the refreshing splash after his work-out.

But the others...?!

Fearful changes were taking place in them. The two old women did not arise from the lawn. No, they lay twisting and turning in agony while uttering the most heart-rending moans and wails. Emily Gale was heard to enunciate the famous repique: “Oh-h, all my beautiful wickedness...!

Look out—here I go!” Then she appeared to faint. Witch Tattypoo’s cries, meanwhile, were more inarticulate but not the less touching for that. Mixed up with her anguish seemed to be a considerable amount of surprise. Even at the last she did not lose consciousness but groaned and mewled and mumbled and whistled ... until her shape shrank in and in and disappeared

into the evening air as wisps of lavender smoke.

The circle of horrified spectators stood silent—except for gasps. The show was not over. As they stared at the black figure of the senseless Aunt Emily Gale and the water drained away from her into the grass, there came, they saw, a change. Was not Em's skin less green, the nose less hooked? Yes, surely those claw-like hands were smoothing into a semblance of the capable lady's hands her relatives remembered. Even the horrid rusty black gown: the dye was draining out of it to leave at last nothing but some friendly flounces of sprigged muslin among the trees on the grass in Munchkinland.

Dorothy Gale turned to look at her uncle with big eyes. "Of course!" she murmured; "Aunt Em isn't a witch."

"No," said Uncle Henry. "But Tattypoo was."

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

It was a very chastened group that sat down to supper of Tattypoo's (rather delicious) ragout in the little old house. The poppy plants in their broken pots had been banished to the edge of the brook and the air in the house was as fresh and wholesome as could be. All was as it once had been, even to Aunt Em dishing up the stew into the eight chipped plates (there were *just* enough) which the house afforded.

"I'll never forgive myself," said Aunt Em for the eleventh time.

"There's nothing to forgive yourself for," said the wizard Wam for the eighth time. (Sometimes the others took turns at protesting.) "As *yourself* you never did any but kindly well-intentioned acts."

"If only I'd never dug up those wretched poppies!"

"But that was not a wicked action—only unfortunate, as it turned out. But, please, never mind all that. The question is: what do we do now?"

"There's nothing we can do," said Henry Gale. "I never heard of even Ozma or Glinda bringing anybody back from destruction."

"Ooh-h!" moaned Em again and refused to eat any ragout. "Will I be tried for murder?"

"You, Aunt Em?!" said Dorothy, who had been brooding but eating. "I'm the one who committed the heinous act. You never lifted a finger." "Well, but for me it would never have happened."

"Em, my dear," said Henry with authority (the events of the last ten days had given him that—while removing it from his wife). "Put a sock in it, do; there's a good girl."

Meekly Em obeyed.

Yet something needs must be done. It was already dark and they didn't even know where they were going to spend the night. There was no room for eight in the Gale cottage.

"That's all right," said Wam. "I'll 'send' the rest of you back to the Amethyst Garden, and Zip and I will camp here. I don't suppose you folks..?" He looked at the Gales enquiringly.

"Land sakes, no!" cried Em with a shudder. Her husband and niece tended to agree that if they never had to see the old house again they'd be just as well pleased. This present meal was indeed the last supper.

That's how they left it. Next morning Wam recalled the others and they set out—some of them—in the red wagon.

Destination?

They still had their agenda of disenchantments to accomplish. Though the one who had been expected to do the disenchanting had gone away, the need hadn't. King Vergrodius' shape, the Prince of Wates' size, as well as the condition of some minds: all these should by rights be altered—though these last were a particularly tricky thing to try to change.

In discussion, after the others had left for the night, Wam and his son hit on a rather neat solution to one problem. Perhaps one should say rather: 'Zip and his father', for it was the former who said to his dad as he lay in the narrow bed that had once been Dorothy's:

"What's the biggest bother about the overgrown prince, Dad?"

"Oh, his pissing and moaning, I suppose," answered Wam, in rough men-together language. "His weight problem will sort itself out *by* itself in time, but I guess it's too bad he's got to

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suffer so long—and so loudly.”

“Right,” concurred Zip. “So if we could just shut up his complaints...?”

“What do you have in mind?” Wam knew of old that his son’s ideas were worth listening to.

“With your constructional skills it wouldn’t be any trouble at all to build a little green-frame up around the window nearest the Prince’s head, would it?”

“Er—no. I think I’ve even got the materials on hand back at Legerdemain Lane—if the Prince hasn’t threshed about and crushed them to shards and sawdust.”

“And let in some moisture?: a sprinkler system?” “That could be managed—though I can’t think what for.”

“We’ll need the wagon for hauling,” mused Zip. “But Uncle could take care of that. There’s also another thing he could manage. You know he and I have been working out at ‘sending’. In fact it was Uncle who got *me* to teleporting again—in just our small way...”

“I’ll have a word with the old gentleman tomorrow first thing,” promised Wammuppirovocuck. “With my instruction he can be ‘sending’ with the best of us in no time.”

“Great. So here’s what I’ve got in mind,” said Zip eagerly, raising up on one elbow. “We’ll get Uncle Henry to send me and you—and Mom too, of course, for company. And then I guess Aunt Em wouldn’t *much* want to be in the Red Wagon with its load—”

“What load?” Wam’s curiosity was sufficiently piqued. He too rose on one elbow and peered toward his son’s bed—though visibility was zero in the darkened house.

“Poppies,” announced Zippiochoggolak. “We’ll collect up some of those cracked pots from down by the brook, plant ‘em underneath the prince’s window—glassed in so he’ll get the fumes direct. In a year or two, when he’s shrunk away into the house far enough from the plants, he’ll wake up by himself—and walk out the door.”

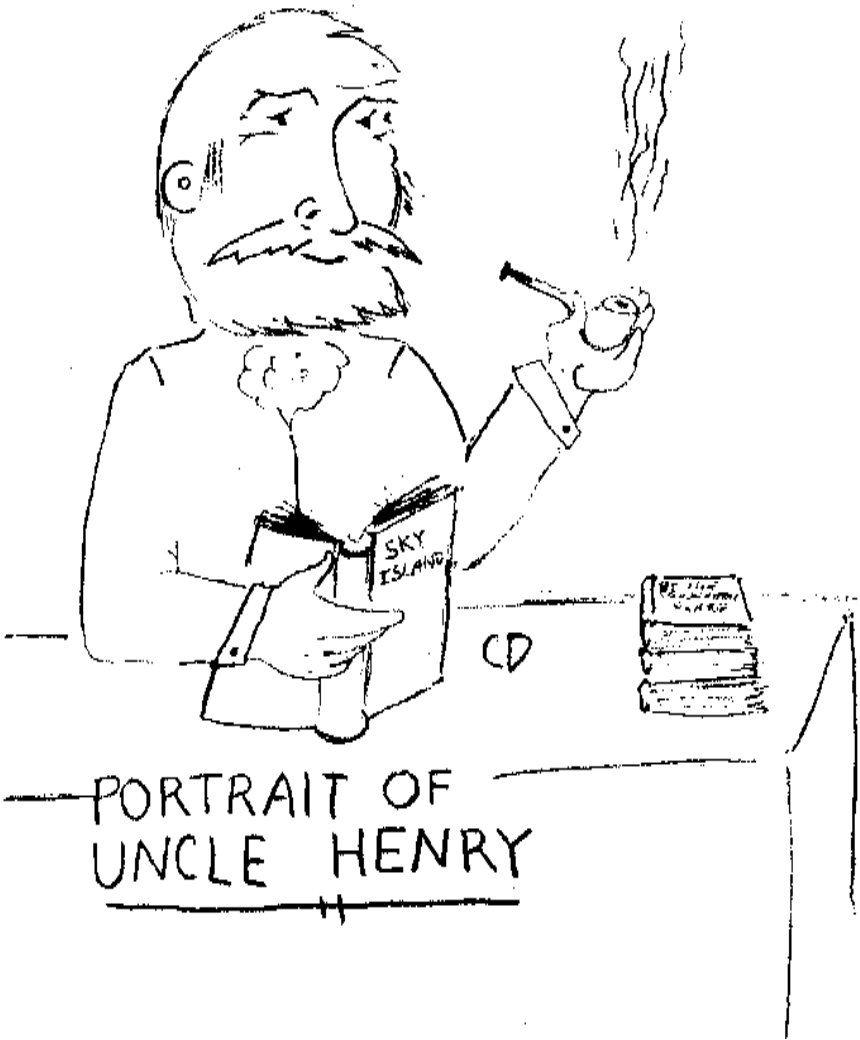
C H A P T E R T W E N T Y - F I V E

That's what they did. Dusting off their hands in Legerdmain Lane, Wam and Zip said to the others, "Now what?"

"Hur-rumphh." King Vergrodius cleared his throat modestly.

"Right you are, Your Highness," said Wam. "Now ideally your case is cured by recourse to the wishing emeralds themselves—which *caused* the enchantment. But does anybody know where *they* are?" Here Nymph Lorna burst into tears afresh. "Oh, woe is me," she mourned. "I compounded my ancient felony by making away with the ones who had caused my unhappiness. Mine is the traditional fate of those who go on a revenge kick: they find, too late, they have need of those they destroy for vengeance's sake. I ate the squirrels... who stole the jewels that lay in the tree where I dwelt. If only those squirrels still survived, we might find them and learn where they hid the necklaces."

Nothing was to be gained by crying over the milk that was spilt. They didn't have time anyway. It was a comforting sign of Mrs. Henry Gale's restoration to her former equanimity that it was she at this point who came to the rescue. "Wasn't there" — she looked to her husband for confirmation — "a where-is-scope among the things the Wizard put in the wagon for us, Henry? I seem to remember..."



“Clever wife!” crowed the old farmer and kissed his life’s companion in delight. How splendid to see she was thinking rationally again—and to great purpose.

Naturally the party had not left the Dorothy’s House National Monument without bringing away the tools they had striven over the possession of—and never used. Now one of them would come into its own. Henry went to the wagon, rum-

maged in a holdall in the back, and returned to the group under the walnut tree with an odd object like a telescope on a short tripod with a slot in either side.

"The way I understand it," he said, "you write out a detailed description of what you want to locate on a narrow strip of paper or card and feed it in through this slot, and out the other side the machine 'reads' the slip and acts accordingly. The 'scope turns in the direction in which the hunted object is to be found and also shows what the area looks like where it is. You just keep following the where-is-scope 'til where you are matches up with what you're looking at—and there you'll find your object."

"Most ingenious," said Wammuppirovocuck with professional appreciation. "An invention of the good wizard Oz?"

"I guess so," confirmed Henry. "But the Wizard's so modest. He never said what-all of these magic implements he perfected himself."

Now Zip wormed his way into the blue/purple-striped house again and found some paper and a pencil. (How rarely recondite objects like those are used in Oz...) Between them Wam and Henry composed the text and soon the where-is-scope was pointing—due south!

"How queer," said King Vergrodius. "It *was* in the forest at Green Mountain that you suspect the squirrels of having hidden or lost the jewels, was it not, my dear?" He turned to lorn Lorna for confirmation.

"I never had reason," said the tree sprite, still a bit weepily, "to think anything else."

"And that's at the edge of the Emerald Country: more west from here than south," said the frog king, *he* knew the route, if anyone did!

"The machine never lies," stated Henry. "Leastways, the Wizard told me he'd never known it to make a mistake."

"Off we go into the south then," declared Wam. "...But wait! Eight of us, plus a wagonload of magic tools, is still a bit much for the wagon. What to do?"

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Aunt Em, getting her courage back and sometimes even starting to feel 'right' again, was the first to speak. "I don't know about you, Henry, but I wonder if I'm needed on this expedition?"

Henry, who was getting his second or third wind, looked disappointed. The necromancer Wam soon made it all right, however.

"That's fine," he said. "I've got an idea. We'll work the divide-and-succeed trick again. This time we'll be careful not to do anything impulsive to upset our plans." This was the only reproach Wammuppirovocuck ever delivered to Miss Dorothy for having annihilated his old colleague, the Witch of the North.

"Now what," he went on, "if Mr. Gale—the newly qualified space-sender—" Wam looked for a moment at Uncle Henry, whose training in teleporting, begun so impromptu and so (it already seemed!) long ago with young Zip, had just been brought to a prosperous conclusion. "—what if he and I collaborate in a little mutual sending? Here's what I have in mind:—" and the necromancer outlined a scheme which seemed to bid fair to settle all problems outstanding with the elegance to which this troupe always aspired—and which always eluded them.

"So it's King Vergrodius and I on the jewel chase," concluded Wam.

"And me!" yelled Zip in sudden alarm lest he miss out on an adventure.

"And me!" cried Dorothy, fearful lest she miss out on Zip.

"That *would* lighten the load for teleporting just now," agreed Wam thoughtfully. "It also divides the party neatly. So be it. Now, if you ladies are ready?... and Mr. Gale..."

Lucinda and Lorna, Aunt Em and Uncle Henry, joined hands, and in an instant they were no more there but safely in the Throne Room in the Palace Magic in the Emerald City of Oz. Thus quietly ended the travels of Mr. and Mrs. Henry Gale in Oz. At least—I think...

C H A P T E R T W E N T Y - S I X

"I wish Uncle Henry was with us," said Zip at the reins as the Red Wagon dashed merrily along. Did Wam the necromancer, busy navigating with the help of the where-is-scope, experience a little pang at this remark?

"Oh, so do I!" said Princess Dorothy warmly. "And you know what? I'll bet he does too. It was awfully loyal of him to go home with Auntie Em to keep her company since she had that awful scare... I'm kinda glad I didn't have to go back with them."

Zip was surprised. Or, when he thought about it, was he really? Anyway he said, "Oh. Why?" Dorothy colored up. "So I didn't have to be there when they explained to Ozma and the others about poor Mrs. Tattypoo. When I think—! The very person who started me off on the right foot in Oz!.. and now she's not there anymore^s..."

"Hrmm!" broke in Wammuppirovocuck to change the subject. "Have a look at this, will you, Dorothy?" He had been glancing into the scope viewfinder at regular intervals—not that it told him much. The view revealed was completely black! After his first dismay Wam had quickly twigged that this probably meant no more than that the emeralds were concealed somewhere in the dark: perhaps where the squirrels, squirrel-

§ But not to worry. See *The Good Witch of Oz*. Editor's note.

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fashion, had originally buried them. Such a state of affairs was, however, by no means disabling for their search. The where-is-scope would soon show them where to dig.

But was it going to be necessary? Suddenly Wam had seen the dark view-finder flooded with light. But before he could grasp what sort of setting the necklaces reposed in, or Dorothy, her attention attracted, could get a glimpse of the scene, the total blackness settled in again. One thing seemed clear: the jewels were no longer (if they had ever been) underground.

The next odd occurrence took place about an hour later. The Sawhorse had sped on as fast as was compatible with keeping in line with the where-is-scope's direction guidance. They had just crossed, by a little rustic bridge, a narrow reach of the Munchkin River in the southern part of the country, when Wam said whimsically, "Does the sun go down in the south?"

"Not usually, sir" answered his son as whimsically.

"Why do you ask that?" croaked the solemn King Vergrodius.

"It's either that or we are now somehow going west. See the sunset straight ahead?"

A few moments' cogitation and Wammuppirovocuck could announce with conviction: "The necklaces are moving!"

That seemed to all of them a very strange thing but yet it seemed to be quite true (unless the where-is-scope had gone crazy), for presently the indicated line of pursuit shifted again toward the southwest.

"What a nuisance," said Wam. "This throws our plans out." He explained. "I never thought we'd have to *chase* the things. At the Sawhorse's speed I figured we'd be wherever the necklaces were by nightfall, do a quick wish, and be ready to join the others back at E.C. Mr. Gale and I have agreed he'll 'fetch' us from the northwest corner of Garnet Square in the Ruby City at ten o'clock tonight. We'll never make it."

"Oh, dear," said Dorothy, "and then they'll worry."

"Exactly," said Wam. "So what do we do now?"

"Well, for one thing, surely: send a message to Ozma at the palace. Let's stop a bird."

This course was agreed upon without discussion. They kept an eye out for feathered friends. The first they caught sight of was a rosebreasted grosbeak perched on a rowan branch pecking at the berries. This was the first they'd realized they had now crossed into the Quadling Country.

"What's your name, dear?" asked Dorothy.

"Dora," said the grosbeak.

"Well, Dora, will you be a pet and relay by way of your friends to Princess Ozma in the Emerald City that our party will be held up? Say that 'we'll come on by Red Wagon as soon as we can make it—and Uncle Henry isn't to bother.' Have you got that?"

"I think so," and the bird repeated the message. Then she flew off on a first stage of the bird messenger service, having assured the travelers that the news should arrive by midnight at the latest.

With easier minds the four travelers rode on, but after all night overtook them. They begged lodging at a gamekeeper's cottage in a redwood forest and were on the way again at daybreak.

It was about ten o'clock of a red-misty morning when Zip at the reins caught a first glimpse of two things ahead: a great rocky hill rising out of the haze and, nearer at hand, a fast-traveling buggy moving in their own line of march toward the hill.

At first the friends couldn't make out what was pulling the buggy but as they slowly (even at the Sawhorse's pace!) gained on the equipage they saw that the locomotive power was supplied by a pink cheetah, the swiftest of all quadrupeds. The sight was surprising even in Oz and our travelers all stared as the vehicles drew abreast.

The driver of the buggy was now seen to be a dark-skinned wizened little old fellow in rumpled clothes. He, too looked to the side curiously as the Red Wagon drew past, and all of them raised their hats politely in salutation. The Sawhorse had got just one length ahead when suddenly Wammuppirovocuck let out a squawk. The where-is-scope was now signaling a direction straight behind them!

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“Stop!” Wam cried to his son—and incidentally to the Sawhorse. “The emeralds are in that buggy!” Both vehicles had begun the ascent of the rocky hill before they finally got stopped side by side and Wam leaned out to accost the startled driver of the other carriage. “Pardon me, good sir! Do you happen to be carrying any emeralds?”

“Num,” said the man. “What kind emeralds did you have in mind?”

“Nothing fancy. Just a necklace—or maybe two—of emerald chips—in a rather nice gold mounting.”

“As it happens,” said the fellow, clearly somewhat mystified, “I do just happen to have with me something that might suit. Did you want to buy—pardon me I should use the expression—”

But Wam broke him off, saying, “Well, as a matter of fact, we just wanted to *borrow* them—briefly!”

“‘Borrow’?” queried the man. “This I don’t understand. What good you should have ‘borrowing’ emeralds?—and ‘briefly’?”

“Let me explain,” said Wam genially. He had gained a most useful bit of information and now was on his guard to proceed cautiously and give nothing away. He climbed down from the wagon and held out his hand. “Pray allow us to introduce ourselves. These are my friends—” and here the wizard named his fellow travelers. “And I am an... engineer, name of Wammuppirovocuck.”

“Pleased to meet you,” said the buggy driver. “I am an itinerant merchant—some people might say ‘peddler’. My name: Levimeyerabloch.”

“A striking name,” commented Wan. “And phonetically very similar in structure to names in our family. Is it possible—”

“We should be relations?” posited Levimeyerabloch. “Could be. My father was Ritzeplummereczek and *his* father was Rappamaxinetock—who had a brother Baumelaumerovik—”

“Say, my father’s third cousin was named Baumizzygreenevick!” declared Wam. “There’s undoubtedly

some connection back there somewhere. Well, Lev.” Having established a basis of cordiality Wam went on to explain all about their quest—almost. Meanwhile the others had alighted from the red wagon, pleased at the chance to stretch their legs—and rub other parts of their bodies—after several hours of unbroken jouncing over the roads. King Vergrodius hovered near where negotiations were going on between the (possibly) distant kinsmen of the tribe of —k. At any moment his long long enchantment might be going to be brought to an end. Dorothy and Zip, hand in hand, strolled forward up the road, looking curiously at the landscape of jagged rocks. The Sawhorse too and the pink cheetah, so nearly matched in their capacity for speed, took this opportunity to get acquainted. “It’s queer,” said Dorothy, looking a little puzzled and even a bit uneasy, “this place reminds me of something...”

“It’s a typically Baumian landscape, isn’t it?” said Zip who was well-read in the history of the fatherland; “a great hill of broken rocks dumped down unmotivatedly in the middle of an otherwise featureless plain.”

“Yes.” said Dorothy musingly. “I wonder if this isn’t—”

But the intriguing topic had to be abandoned when they heard Wam calling. “Dorothy! Would you mind stepping here for a moment? Let us see how these look on you.”

There in the necromancer’s hands rested at last the delicate filigrees of emeralds and gold that so many had so long searched and sighed for!

The little girl was delighted to comply. She took up the sparkling feather-weight chains one by one and laid them about her neck, while Zip fastened the catches at the back and Wam elucidated one little mystery: “Mr. Levimeyerabloch had been keeping them in a closed bureau drawer at home until yesterday, when he took them out and put them in a jewel case to bring on this trip. He’s on his way to call on our good friend Glinda who sent him a hurry-up order for some new jewelry!”

“Oh, what fun!” said Dorothy, pleased, as she waited for Zip to do the second catch. “But, Mr. Lev,” she addressed the

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peddler, “can we ask where you got them? You see—I suppose Mr. Wam has explained?—we knew about these necklaces, but we thought ... they were somewhere else entirely,” she ended a bit lamely, not sure how much Wam had seen fit to reveal.

“Interesting you should ask that,” said Lev, rubbing his hands as he inspected the effect the jewels made on the little girl’s breast. “I haven’t had them all that long. I traded them—for an axe—from a woodcutter’s boy in the forest of Vervalde, oh, maybe two months ago.”

“And where did *he* get them?” persisted Dorothy.

“Well, he tried to make me believe he *found* them!—right at the bottom of a pile of old leaves in a remote corner of the forest. I didn’t enquire too closely,” said Lev and gave a conspiratorial wink.

Now Dorothy had an idea that this scene of the trying on of the necklaces was being stage-managed by the capable Wammuppirovocuck for a purpose and she looked at him for guidance as she found excuses to keep them around her neck. “I’d love to see how I look in them!” she said. “Have any of us got a mirror?”

“Mirrors is it?” said Lev. “Now I just disposed last week of a handsome set of three polished-silver mirrors—that reflect the past, the present, and the future. They went to a magician on the Winkie border who goes in for mirrors in a big way. Remind me I should tell you sometime about his scheme for casting the biggest mirror in the world^s ... But at the moment, no: a mirror I haven’t got.”

Wammuppirovocuck waited politely for Lev’s spiel to be finished, then said quietly, “Step over to the Red Wagon, why don’t you, Dorothy? There may well be a looking glass in one of the hold-alls with the wizard Oz’s equipment... Oh, and perhaps Ki-er, Mr. Vergrodius would like to help you,” he said pointedly, looking down at the frog and giving a wink so aimed as not to be observed by Lev the peddler.

Dorothy took the hint of the thoroughly impractical sugges-

§ See *The Magic Mirror of Oz*. Editor’s note

tion and went across to the back of the Red Wagon where, under the guise of rummaging in the three sacks of magic tools, she muttered under her breath, "I do now hereby formally wish that the enchantment of the frog, King Vergrodius of the Green Mountain, be utterly and irrevocably reversed and undone."

Splendid. Dorothy after so many years at the court of the fairy Ozma was conversant with the protocol of spells. Her thorough incantation worked like a charm — which indeed it was. The squat figure of the giant green frog was gone and by Dorothy's side at the tailgate of the wagon now stood a similarly squat form of a man: ugly of feature but not deformed, somewhat shorter than Dorothy herself, with a face made even more uncomely by lines of suffering and deprivation — and yet... there was an air of majesty and something of sensitive humanity about the face and figure that touched the heart.

Incidentally the figure was also unclothed. Contrary to common belief clothes do not follow along in a transformation. But Princess Dorothy did not panic; instead, she calmly reached back into sack number two and pulled out a cracker-jacket she had noticed there and handed it to the king. It came down to his knees but that was all right. Solemnly and without speech he bowed deeply to his benefactress.

Suddenly! the little tableau was interrupted in the rudest possible way. A wild and hairy human (well, almost) head shot out of nowhere and knocked the little king sprawling, then instantly flew back to where it came from — which the startled glances of all our friends ascertained to be the hinder side of the nearest big rock.

"Oh, horrors!" screamed Dorothy. "It's those terrible Hammer-Heads! I knew there was something disagreeably familiar about this place! Take cover, everybody!"

They didn't need to be warned twice. In five seconds Wam, Zip, Lev the peddler, the shaken King Vergrodius, and Dorothy were crowded under the Red Wagon, peering out anxiously. There was enough to be anxious about. For now from behind

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every rock they saw a wild and threatening head peering back at them.

“What are they?” stammered young Zip in a scared voice.

“Oh, they’re dreadful creatures!” gasped Dorothy. “I ran into them once a long time ago. They haven’t got any arms, as you can see, but they can shoot out their horrid long necks to any length—and pound people with those awful heads. I don’t know why but they’re called ‘Hammer-Heads’. They’re really more like ‘pile-driver-heads’. Oh, they’re terrible!”

Meanwhile the heads kept cannoning out and as often as not colliding with something, though nothing much to their taste. A few smacks into the unyielding sides of the red wagon taught their owners not to repeat that ploy often. “Steady, Sawks! steady!” called Wammuppirovocuck to the Sawhorse. “The wagon’s our only protection! Try to keep cool!” He need not have worried. The phlegmatic (and brave) Sawhorse did not panic.

It was worse for the poor pink cheetah in the shafts of Lev’s buggy. A lucky strike by a shooting head knocked him senseless—and incidentally the head also. It dropped to the ground and lay with its neck stretched twenty feet along the ground like some great greyish-pink serpent.

“Oh, pyooh!” cried Dorothy in disgust, not liking to imagine what else the thing might resemble, only on a larger scale. “Isn’t it obscene! Nasty things. I wish they’d never been born!”

Instantly the heads vanished.

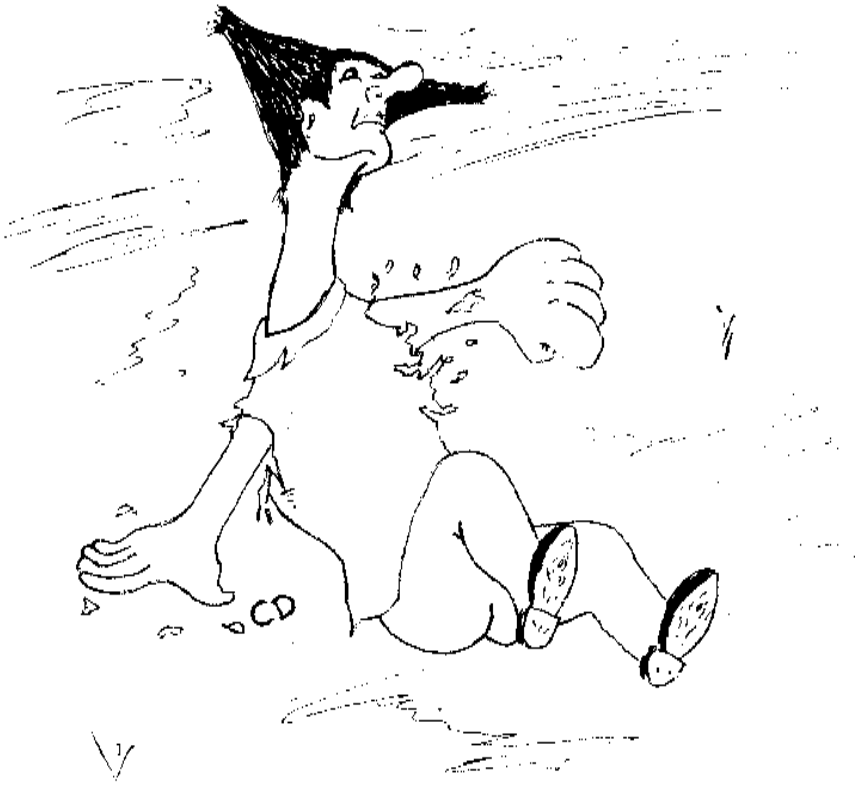
Once again Dorothy had been impulsive! It was only an instant though before she realized what she had done. Not wishing to have any further—and mass!—annihilations on her conscience, she hastily amended: “No! I mean: I wish they’d never been born like they are! I wish they were—uh, um—more like normal people!.. And I also wish their horrid hill was a valley!”

No sooner wished than accomplished, though with some little upset to everyone involved. With a great graceful swooping settling motion the very earth around them sank away and

all the big jagged boulders went bounding down the slopes of the emergent valley to collect in a ridge at the bottom. A number of Hammer-Heads got crushed in the process, but then there were more than enough of those to go round.

The buggy with its unconscious cheetah in the shafts would have followed the example of the rolling rocks but that the resourceful Sawhorse disobeyed instructions and pulled his vehicle into its path to block the buggy's motion.

And the Hammer-Heads that survived? They still had their big ugly flat-topped heads but these were now attached to their short stout bodies by thick necks of normal length. The trend to normality was enhanced by the sprouting of arms, at first constrained inside the creatures' clothes until one, then another, then many, began to poke their fists out through the seams, and these fists were seen to be particularly big and muscular.



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Becoming “more like normal people” did not reduce in the slightest the Hammer-Heads’ belligerence. After a momentary pause of astonishment at the change that had come over them all, the tribe now resumed the attack. Where formerly heads had served to attack their enemies with, the creatures soon discovered that fists would do as well.

In a mass they advanced on the fearful travelers, who had scrambled to position themselves once more under the wagon and buggy. The Hammer-Heads got in a few good blows—but so did our heroes.

As a perfectly natural reaction, now that there was nothing for it, all four of the men clambered out from under the wagon and began to lay about them. Even the Sawhorse got into the act by kicking out stoutly at any of the attackers who came within range of his rear hoofs.

The hero of the occasion proved, however, to be—King Vergrodius! He showed an amazing knack for grabbing any fist that came near him and cracking its knuckles, nay, crushing them, so that its owner retired howling and the fist was pulp for the rest of that day. Occasionally even a head or two would come within range and then he would crack these together resoundingly, so resoundingly indeed that in some cases the heads split right open and the contents, a sort of feathery pink chaff (‘like the Scarecrow’s brans!’ thought Dorothy wildly, under the wagon), spilled on the morning breeze and blew gently away. Curiously, this did not seem to mean that the Hammer-Heads thus afflicted remained any less alive or, indeed, any less intelligent than they had been before.

“Hang in there, Your Highness!” shouted Wammuppirovocuck from the fray. “You’re doing great. I never knew boxing was your sport!”

“No more did I!” the king yelled back. “I must take it up.”

“Hey!” cried Zip in his turn. “Now I know what a ‘crackerjacket’ is good for!” and in delight he belted another Hammer-Head full in the face.

With King Vergrodius’ splendid assist our friends actually

won the encounter. When the last Hammer-Head had slunk away down the valley to begin a new, vallecular, and conceivably even less combative life, Wam turned aside and gave his hand to lead Princess Dorothy out from under the wagon.

“Now then, my dear,” said he, “will you favor us with one last wish?”

“You mean—?” said the princess.

“Mm-hmh,” said Wam.

C H A P T E R T W E N T Y - S E V E N

“How nice to have you all here safe at last,” said Princess Ozma from her seat on a bench in Peridot Park.

Dorothy’s wish had delivered her and all her friends, *with* vehicles, to an open glade among the trees. The intelligent young princess had begun to learn to think ahead and weigh the possible effects of her impulses. Happening to reflect that a Sawhorse and a Red Wagon, as well as a buggy and an unconscious cheetah, might be perplexed to find themselves in the throne room of Ozma’s palace, she had worked her spell to place them in the nearest open location convenient to the royal residence. From there it was only the work of a moment for Wam to ‘send’ his son into the palace and the presence of the queen.

“Mission accomplished, Your Grace,” called Wammuppirovocuck as the exhausted travelers saw Ozma’s little party approaching through the park. Then Princess Dorothy took the lead to present to their ruler and to the genially smiling Wizard Oz of Oz that other wizard, Wam, his son Zippiochoggolak, and their (possible) cousin Levimeyerabloch.

The little queen was most charming and most condescending. “Well,” she said, and this royal word served to draw from their embraces of rapturous reunion Princess Dorothy and her aunt and uncle, Zip and his mother, and — well, it wasn’t exactly

embraces Nymph Lorna and the newly restored young King Vergrodius were exchanging but salutations of perhaps even more intense emotion, though of less outward show. “—all our cares are over then?” continued the Girl Ruler. “And you’ll all live happily ever after, I trust?”

At that they (nearly all) looked grave. Young Zippiochoggolak broke from his mother’s clasp and moved impulsively toward the seated Queen. “Oh, Princess Ozma, our cares are NOT all over!” he declared. “My mum would still be depressed living in Dad’s workshop—and bored living at home in the amber castle—”

“Oh, darling, you shouldn’t!” cried Lucinda, the former Maid—now Lady—of Light. “Princess Ozma doesn’t want to hear about our family troubles! Anyway, I’m not bored or unhappy at all when we are all together and going on visits—” Here she broke off in confusion.

“I should never wish to intrude—of course,” stated the Queen, “but if I could help in any way...”

“That’s just it, isn’t it, Ozma?” put in the Wizard of Oz. “Our charms and spells always have to do with purely physical conditions and objects, including, of course, living bodies. But they have no effect upon minds.”

“No, Oz,” said Ozma, “you’re right. It’s rare magic that can affect how people feel about things.”

“Then there’s King Vergrodius,” Zip went on urgently. “He deserves to be happy now—and Miss Lorna too—but, I don’t know, they just don’t seem to match up right. If only the King were tall and handsome... maybe...”

Here the young monarch of the Green Mountain put in a necessary word. “Pardon me, my dear young friend—very dear indeed, for all you have done for me—but I must after all object. If I am to be loved it must be for me as I am, not for an outward show that might be assumed. Even to win my dear Lorna I would not be false to myself.”

During this last speech Princess Ozma had been staring—yes, I’m afraid she did—at Zip’s cap, which he had at first held

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deferentially behind him but latterly, in the stress of his feeling, had brought forward to clutch in both hands. The queen smiled.

“What is that I see in your cap, Zip?” she asked, seemingly inconsequently.

It was the Lad of Light’s turn to stare, first at the Queen, then at the cap. He yanked out the blood-red rose—which glowed as freshly as the moment it was plucked. “This flower,” he stammered. “It’s a souvenir ... of our travels...”

“That is the Rose of Romance,” stated Ozma quietly. “It never dies. It is one of the most potent charms known. He who swallows a single petal—or any part of the plant—sees all the world in rose color: everything as he would most wish it to be. It’s only illusion, of course, but it’s what the world is built on.”

A large silence fell upon the group in the park as they thought of what she had said.

Vergrodius was the first to speak. “I used to chew on the stem of that flower—when we both lived in Zip’s cap-band.”

Then, “Please, please!” cried the faded pretty nymph—that was Lorna, “let me have one petal off the plant!”

Silently Zip held the blossom out to her. When she had done what she meant to do, Lorna went to the king of the Green Mountain and knelt again before him. “My lovely lord,” she said. He opened his arms and she went into them, never to leave again.

“I think, my dearest, if I may,” said the Lady of Light to her son, “I’ll have one leaf from that rose.”

Zip handed over the flower again. Then more than ever before a brilliance shone in the face of the Lady of Light and a smile in which there was no trace either of boredom or despair. She put an arm around Zip and together they moved to the side of the necromancer Wammuppirovocuck. Now they could go home.

Next Emily Gale thought it would not be amiss if she—and her husband too—were each to consume a petal of the rose. As usual Em was right.

C H A P T E R T W E N T Y - E I G H T

Aunt Em had just come out of the house after spreading over the burnt place on the floor the white rag rug which she had gone so far to retrieve and whose retrieval had been so filled with destiny. It had come back to her at last among the treasures in the red wagon.

She looked up and saw Dorothy running toward her. "My darling child!" she cried, "where in the world are you going?" for she saw that Dorothy had on a dust coat, goggles, and a wideawake tied on with a chiffon scarf.

"Around the Land of Oz," said Dorothy, radiantly. "And here is Toto; he's going too. Please say you'll go with us, Aunt Em! There's so many things to do—and all fun!"

"Why, Dorothy, I don't know," said her aunt. "We've just got home again. The house needs a thorough doing-out. And I've learned my lesson: not to go off on any more wild-goose chases." "Oh, darling, I promise we won't chase any geese! But wouldn't it be nice to be there when King Vergridius resumes his throne? And we'll be useful! because he says he doesn't intend to intrude if his successor is doing a good job. He wants us to help decide if he (or she) is! Then he'd like our advice in case he and Lorna plan to do something else. He says it doesn't matter what—as long as they're together.

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"We thought it would be fun too if we all went along when Levimeyerabloch makes his belated appearance at the court of Glinda the Good. Our Wizard gave the poor cheetah an injection and he's back on his feet again and frisky as before. Did you know Lev calls him the 'Charming Cheetah'?! Apparently he's a most winning animal, when you get to know him—"

"His owner's probably a charming cheater himself," sniffed Aunt Em, who as a Kansas farm wife had her own suspicions of itinerant peddlers.

Dorothy laughed gaily at the humorous sally but then she said seriously, "Actually we cheated *him*, poor man. You see, Wam wasn't taking any chances that Lev might not want to part with the emeralds. We actually used them without permission. Still, the Wizard agreed the ends justified the means. I *suppose* he's right... Anyway; of course we've told Lev what valuable talismans he possesses. He says it'll be a long time before he parts company with them now!

"And then of course," the girl went on, "as long as there's no room for them in Wam's house, the necromancer and his family are going to the amber Castle of Light for a bit. I'd love to see it! and Zip has begged me to come. So you see, I, at least have got to go. And Uncle—"

"Henry? What about him?!"

"Well, Auntie Em, Uncle Henry would like to go too. But not without you..."

Emily Gale reached inside the door and pulled a hat and coat from the pegs there. "Where are the others?" she asked.

"There!" And Dorothy pointed off across the lawn to where a regular little crowd of people stood on the palace drive beside the Red Wagon and an old black buggy.

"Let's go," said Aunt Em.