

## C H A P T E R

## F I F T E E N

Unlike Sieur Robert de Gillequin, off-put lord of a pocket county of mountain valleys who had awakened to find a rubber woman in his bed but, for all that, set out to keep an eye on her when she *would* go adventuring, King Ree Alla Bad of the much larger raj of Seebania stayed home.

You note the term “raj”. The King’s name recalls nomenclature familiar from Muslim and Hindu lands (although, to be sure, in those places “bad” evidently means ‘town’ [Hyderabad, Islamabad] and is scarcely to be found in names of persons). Yet we want a non-English-language derivation for His Majesty’s third name, for, good gracious! the royal infant had not been named in the expectation that he would actually be ‘bad’!

Ree was in fact rather good: jolly, kind, loyal, even if somewhat unserious and mickey-removing like Errol Flynn. He was blue then, when his wife and son left him on his throne, alone, and went off into the tame blue yonder. Such bluishness came naturally in the land of the Munchkins, and when King Ree was blue he was really blue. He moped on his throne until noon and thought about what he might do about it.

It was no good summoning his ancient associates, the robber band, to form an arméd guard to wait upon her Grace, the Begum. The robbers had all been turned into innocuous farm-

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ers in Winkieland by the interfering—sorry, I mean: wise, benevolent—Princess-Fairy Ozma. To send for them and reinstruct them as to who they really were would be as circumstantial an endeavor as to go to the residence of Dr. Pipt itself.

How was Ree Alla Bad going to hold a protecting hand over his dear strolling truants? Now he regretted that they had always eschewed the use of magic at the court in Shamsbad ('-bad', you see, meaning 'city'). With just a bit of Powder of Life or a wishing ring he might empower some expendable piece of furniture to scamper through the forest and catch up with the travelers before they came to any hurdle they might need assistance with. A sturdy live chair or a clever solid screen might make all the difference.

Nobody came, after all, to consult King Ree as he sat in state on the throne. He soon quitted the seat royal and wandered upstairs to take a place beside the collapsed bedstead of his uncle Stephen.

The pitiable old marble figure was as stiff as a board—no, stiffer!—as saying (and feeling) nothing. Ree shifted the fallen posts of the baldaquin from upon his uncle's form. But afterwards it was depressing as well as boring, to just sit there.

And all outdoors it was wonderful spring! Everything in the ex-bandit cried to be out there. Alas, as far as he could reach was the big lattice window of the bedchamber. This at least he could fling open so as to lean out and take great healing lungfuls of hyacinth-scented air. He leaned on his elbows and longed.

Presently a little bird dropped down and perched on the window ledge near him.

"Whatcha doin'?" it asked.

"Oh—hi!" said Ree, startled. "Just dreaming, I guess. I'm stuck in here—and on such a fine day."

"What's got hold of ya?" The little green-blue tit gave a hop and glanced behind the leaning man. "I don't see anything."

"Nothing's holding me," disclaimed Ree. "That's to say: something is, but you can't see it."

"Oh," said the bird. "What is it?"

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"My family's gone away and I can't follow them—because I'm king around here and have to stay and legislate."

"That does sound tedious," condoled the tit. "Have they gone far?"

"Right across the country, and darn! anything could happen. My wife, the Begum—or Queen, you know—has hardly ever set foot outside of the Palace. How's she going to cope?"

"But you said 'family'. There'll be somebody with her. Maybe he, or she, could do the coping."

"Oh, Ojo," tended to dismiss the sorrowing parent. "He's only a boy... Well, he's let himself grow to eighteen but he's still untried. Brave, you know, and honorable, but after all still a kid."

"Gee," said the bird. "I know how you feel. I once loved a royal lady. Still do, for that matter. You do a lot of worrying when they're off gallivanting."

You'll have guessed! of course. The dicky bird was Bert the Bird,<sup>§</sup> now a bit at loose ends since his adventures of the year before. Others had paired off but he had been left as odd bird out. It hurt. But you didn't let anyone know, of course.

Bert went on now to describe his long-time enforced cell-sharing with the fifty-tongued bird. "Did she really have fifty tongues?" Ree wanted to know.

"No, not really. It was a way of saying that she could sing in fifty different bird languages.

"Later, I was able to help a bit in a quest of hers."

"I wish you could help in my 'bird's' quest," said Ree dolefully.

Then, "Of course you *could!*" he cried, snapping his fingers loudly. "Could you think of going to succor a royal lady again?" he asked the tit.

"Sure," said Bert. "I've joined the Bird Messenger Service.\* I often run little errands around the country."

"Come in! please," said King Ree, leading the way to a worktable situated behind the throne. Here were spread out plans

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§ See *The Umbrellas of Oz*.

\* See the Oz stories of Aleksander Volkov. (Editor's notes)

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for palace wiring, diagrams showing sewage networks in the city of Shamsbad, and an ordinance map of Munchkinland.

"Here's the way my people have to go," Ree indicated. "See there: the principalities of Halidom and Troth. They should be all right there; those people know about noblesse oblige. But just in case: would you fly ahead and alert the lords of the land that Queen Isomere is on her way? They might even send out a welcoming committee. That would cheer my wife and boy.

"Then they've got to get past the Rolling Road and the domain of Ku-Klip, hopably without mishap. There might be some way you could assist them there. As for the Munchkin River, which they'll have to get across: that's sometimes a problem if there isn't a ferry. We can't count on a bridge. The map doesn't show one. Of course it *is* a few years old.

"Afterwards they pass within shooting distance of my own old bandits' cave. Alas, there won't be any jolly bandits there to welcome them. It might work out, though, that they want to pass a night in the cave. It has all modern conveniences. You might be able to show them the way to it.

"Now here the map shows rather a blank area. I know that region from of old. There are traps there for the unwary. Please try to help them avoid them.

"Too bad the yellow brick roads they'll cross run in the wrong direction. What trails there are are not very well marked. Will you fly look-out and guide them? Skirt the man-eating plants if you can. I doubt if you'll get within range of the tiresome old Foolish Owl and Wise Donkey.

"After that it's just a shortish haul up the mountainside to Doctor Pipt's place. Can you manage? Will you?"

"I'll do my best," promised the dickey bird.

## C H A P T E R

## S I X T E E N

The straight magician, Dr. Oliver N. Pipt (I'll bet you didn't know the Doctor's name was Oliver..?), had called for volunteers. It was the upshot of his council called in the glade that the Magicians proposed to mount an expedition to go seek advice.

The problem was the same as that which had confronted the newly enwitched Diane-Orin-Tattypoo: the wizards had among them spells and charms that might have served to undo the lately reinvoked enchantments. But did they dare use them? It would be upsetting if, e.g., they demagicified even the live victrola only to have it disintegrate or disappear entirely. They wanted to be sure such measures were safe. Whom could they consult for reassurance? Why, probably only the Big Three of licensed adepts in Oz: Fairy Princess Ozma, the Wizard O.Z. Diggs, and the renowned Sorceress Glinda.

A Select Committee had been named and the group were preparing, by dawn's early light, to set out. The doctor himself would go, of course. Level-headed Wammuppirovocuck and his talented son Zippiochoggolak were thought likely participants. And two or three others. Meanwhile, overhead flew a worried-looking dove they couldn't seem to drive away. They asked it what it wanted but it wouldn't say anything.

Pipt was trying to make up his mind whether the admittedly

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intelligent Pink Bear (with his inescapable companion, the Lavender one) would be more of a help or a hindrance on the safaris when the pink bear himself spoke:

“Is this trip necessary? Why don’t you wire ahead and find out?”

“Wire,” stuttered Pipt, momentarily taken aback.

“Didn’t I see a telegraph set-up in your laboratory? Anyway it looked like one I’ve seen at Wizard Diggs’ in the Emerald City.”

That was a very observant Little Pink Bear. The straight magician confessed. “I’ve never used it. I know how to do magic but I’m hopeless at mechanics. I’ve forgotten how to work the thing—if I ever really grasped it—though of course I didn’t let on the time Diggs and the Shaggy Man kindly installed it.”

Stifling a yawn, Wizard Wam said, “Let me take a look at it. I’ve a bit of know-how.” He was being grossly modest. Wam had in the past performed wonders of structural engineering<sup>§</sup> and both he and his son would bring off technical finesses in the far future.\* But before Dr. Pipt could answer yea or nay, one clear call came from a cottage a hundred yards away among the trees.

It was Lucinda! the lady of lights wife to Wammuppirovocuck. “Wam!” she called. “When are you coming to bed?!”

Bed! In all the excitement no one had thought of beds. Suddenly beds bulked large.

Madam Lucinda had followed up her query by tripping through the dewy copse in bedroom mules and a smock thrown over her dressing gown. “You’ve been up all night,” she reproached them all as she drew near. “You must be exhausted.”

“Exhausted!” blustered her husband. “Far from it. We’re just setting out on a quest,” he announced, stifling another yawn. “On matters tendering the safety of the realm,” he went on Shakespeareanly.

“I’m sure they can wait until tomorrow!” affirmed Lucinda comfortably, taking her man’s arm. “Come now... You too, Zip!”

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§ See *Uncle Henry & Aunt Em in Oz*.

• See *The Ten Woodmen of Oz*. (Editor’s notes)

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she turned with a smile to her son.

"Oh, ma," whined the boy. "Dad's just going to try to operate the doctor's Morse set. I wanna watch."

"Morse," echoed the lady. Even she knew what the name implied. "Who is he going to communicate with?"

"Princess Ozma! and witch Glinda."

"At five o'clock in the morning?" gasped Lucinda. "You've got to be kidding," she lapsed into the vernacular. "The ladies will just be getting the best part of their beauty sleep. They wouldn't thank you at all for your dots and dashes."

The distaff prevailed. Everybody *was* rather sleepy. It was not a hard job to persuade the men that telegraphy and quest-going could reasonably be postponed until a more seasonable hour.

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

At the Palace of Magic in the Emerald City they were setting out. Yes, they really were. I'll bet you thought the joke was that they never would. But you see, they'd all had a good night's rest, it was another splendid spring day, and they had had enough of playing, or watching being played, chess the day before. They'd go a-questing just to have something to pass the time, if nothing else.

Flight was also the best escape from the impatient Emerald Citizens, who with the morning had gathered again in force outside the railings. The only question was: whither might the questers go that would be productive?

It was Egbert Woozy, of course, who suggested the answer. His most intimate association with magic (an entity clearly involved in their present problem) was when his very own three tail-hairs had been required for the composition of a potent spell. On that occasion he had heard a great deal about a certain Doctor Pipt. Later he had even met the gnarled old gentleman and been properly impressed with the savant's abilities at the hexing kettle and the thaumaturgy table. If anyone, the doctor would know how to undo unwanted enchantments.

Gen. Battles concurred. "The three wise Adepts of Magic deemed Dr. Pipt reformed, sufficiently reliable, and of enough



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substance to be allotted the telegraph sending station for north-east Oz. We might contact him and have a word..."

"Good idea," seconded the bright Whistlebreeches. "Might find out in advance if there's any point in going to see him."

Alas: when Omby Amby tried dot-dashing to the faraway blue-forest station there was no reply. Though they were not to know, the only person there capable of receiving or sending a message had already set out on a mission.

It was the routine from the day before over again: check one's borrowed valise, give a glance around to be assured that all was in order for leaving the palace unattended, and then to join the Sawhorse at the stables. Each took a room or suite to check through.

It chanced to be the Woozy who was assigned to the Orangery.

This was a charming triangular room in the southwest corner of the great green building (*southeast* for the nonce, of course), which served as a semi-tropical *estufa fria*, as the Portuguese call it. It was just comfortably hot enough there for orange trees in tubs to flourish. The color scheme was kept in appropriate orange as well: coconut matting runners, drawdrapes, the wooden palings of the tubs.

Thus it was that when the Wooze glanced in, expecting to see all neatly orange before him, he got a start when he espied a confusing tangle of red, blue, and green. The sight seemed to be coming from under an orange marble bench.

Egbert woozed cautiously nearer, then gasped: "Your majesty!" (he being ever mindful of a former queenship of Patch) "what are *you* doing here?!" It was Kathie Lee and Regis all over again, forty years ahead of time.

Yes, the worshipful Woozy was of those who did not fail to accord honor where honor was not out of place. For him the Patchwork Girl would ever enjoy the aura of regality she had enjoyed as ruler of her own patchwork kingdom, just as Messrs. Truman and Reagan still remained "Mr. President" in retirement.

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"Hnh-hnh, you caught me out, I see.

It's too late now to try to flee," muttered Scraps and hid her face in her cottonglove hands where she crouched under the stone seat.

"Why would you want to flee?" enquired the Woozy mildly.

"Well ... you see..." The girl seemed struck verseless. "I was once a mad creature. I have done those things that now give evidence against my soul." Even the Patchwork Girl could quote Shakespeare when appropriate.

"'Once'?" wondered the Woozy. "You were always a bit mad, your Grace," he said frankly.

The girl didn't deny it. "But once more than others," she testified.

"What was your madness, my dear? I pray you, tell it me." Even the Woozy could paraphrase the Bard for advantages.

"Oh, no... I'm too ashamed."

The Woozy was of course too polite and good-natured to probe and nag. "Well, never mind. Come along," he urged. "We're off on a quest. You mustn't stay here and mope on your own."

Reluctantly Scraps allowed herself to be dragged out from under the bench, and then she followed the Woozy to the rendezvous in the Great Foyer. The others were all agog when they saw the famous pied personality approaching.

"Scraps!" they cried. "How lovely to see you! Tell us: what's been going on in the Palace?! You must have seen—"

"I know nothing!" the girl broke them off.

"I'm innocent!" And to her friends' considerable astonishment she broke into tears: not in her cloth body but from her eyes.

No one knew what to make of that, but, like the Woozy, they were too considerate to insist. Queen Lorna took the girl's hand and laid a protecting arm around her shoulders. "Come now," she urged gently. "We're just off to board the red wagon. You must come with us."

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“Oh, yes! Although I can’t confess  
The causes of my crime,  
I’ll emigrate—and expiate—  
While I still have the time,”  
the Patchwork Girl murmured enigmatically.

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

It was once upon a time in the sweet long-ago and the Patchwork Girl of Oz was seated upon her bed, sewing industriously at a new dress for herself. I said ‘bed’ because, although she never slept, Scraps wanted to be just like other girls, with her own ‘bedroom’ and all.

After all, she had been wearing the same patchwork gown for forty years now and it had been in and out of fashion so many times that she was sick of it. Furthermore, there were so many patches upon patches: scars from all the times she had burst into tears on various occasions—that the old thing hardly held together any more. Now she was treating herself to a really tasteful ensemble in silver lamé with satin panels and fichu. Enough of all that variegated color jumble she had always been known by!

Absent-mindedly she hummed a little song as her cotton fingers nimbly positioned, pinned, and stitched together swatches of indicated fabrics.

“This is going to be the gayest frock anyone has ever had,” said the girl as she held up and admired her handiwork. Then her eye shifted down to the old gown the new one was going to replace. The old dress was like the coat of many colors that Joseph is said to have worn in the tale from the Bible. The cloth

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swatches she had used for repairs, variegated and colorful, had been collected by the Patchwork Girl from cast-off costumes of others of the female Oz courtiers.

But Scraps' attention had wandered. Needlework was old stuff to her. It made up all of her life. At least, it made up all of her. Sometimes she could grow a little bored with it. Now she placed a finger to her mouth and momentarily sat in deep thought. 'Oh, if only I were as powerful as Ozma, the Wizard, and Glinda the Good,' she ruminated.

Abruptly she put aside the new dress and bounced to her feet. She went to her brightly cushioned window seat. The flat wooden ledge of this was at the same time the lid of a useful storage chest that made up the support of the seat. Flinging aside the pillows she lifted the lid and took out a thick book which reposed there. Scraps had been rather naughty once (naughtier than usual) and abstracted the volume from the bookshelves in the tower laboratory of O.Z. Diggs, the Wizard of Oz.

On the cover of the tome was embossed *The History and Practice of Magic*. The window seat might not perhaps be the safest place to hide the forbidden book; but the girl always wanted easy access to it and it was convenient to have it there. Anyway, she reflected, she rarely had visitors to her bedroom.

Lovingly Scraps fingered the pages as she turned to the chapter headed "Magic Dolls in Effigy (Voodoo Type)". She honestly had in mind good thoughts about her friends in Oz as she quickly refreshed her memory of the description of how to make a herbal "character" doll with magical properties by means of the recital of an incantation:

'Medicina propens proprio exito necessita adjuncta exnero vino amoroso netvians en lubio venom enticio pupas.'

The lovable Patchwork Girl has already created replicas of some of her friends: Princess Ozma, the Frogman, the Vegetable Man, the Scarecrow, and others. Each was a herbal doll stuffed with lavender, verbena, patchouli, and/or so forth, guaranteed (according to the directions in the chapter) to add magical properties to each of the dolls. She had planned the poppets as gifts

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for her friends and wanted to give them something unusual, such as these odiferous herbs. She had no intention, she told herself sternly, of harming anyone through the power of the magic she had set herself to dabble in.

Alas, she hadn't but if she *had* read all of the information included in the direction book, she would have learned that such dolls as she contemplated were meant to reflect the spiritual powers of the individuals they represented. Great harm, it said, could come to the real life of persons effigied if the dolls were used improperly, or fell into an enemy's hands.

Scraps moved to the shelf in the corner of her room and touched several of the dolls she has already made. There was to be a get-together of most of the doll-depicted friends in the near future and she hoped to distribute her creations to them at that time.

Now she snatched a basket from her closet and left the apartment, bound for the herb garden in the rear of the Palace of Magic. The halls were quiet as she passed along, although she did get an impression of far-off voices coming from the top of the stairwell. The girl paid no heed; she was anxious to be outside and gathering further fragrant herbs with which to stuff her dolls.

Locating the herb plantation in the enormous expanse of gardens was easy enough. All she had to do was sight on the tall-upthrusting statue of a pipes-playing faun carved of jade which stood near the herbarium.

Scraps said over to herself the names of the herbs she intended to secure as she read the little signs that distinguished the various varieties. One of the herbs was labeled "gingemmaseng" and was a brilliant chartreuse in hue.

As she plucked this particular herb she suddenly heard pipes of Pan being played and when she looked up she saw that the faun statue was standing on his other leg from what he had done a moment ago. As she picked further, she heard more piping notes and turned to discover that the faun was now standing on both his hoofs.

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Twenty minutes later, as the Patchwork Girl was just completing her harvest, a little dickey bird fluttered down and perched on a tumbleweed twig near her.

"Watcha doin'?" piped the bird.

"Why, hello, Bert," replied the girl, then paused. She didn't quite want to tell the bird specifics of her plans. She merely said, generally, "Just pickin' herbs!"

"Whatcha gonna do with 'em?"

"Oh, that would be telling, wouldn't it?" The girl rerouted the conversation by saying, "Tell me, Herbert; you're often in and out of these gardens: didn't that faun over there usually stand on one leg—in an attitude of dance?"

"Yes. It sure did—and does," replied the dickey bird.

Scraps did a double-take, whirling to stare at the marble statue. "Why, just a minute ago—!"

She broke off, marveling at the strangeness of things. She knew this was a magic herb garden (the only sort appropriate to the estate of a great fairy like Ozma), but just the same...

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

The countess (and her party) coming from the north and the queen-begum arriving from the south (after a night spent camping out rather uncomfortably) reached the house of Doctor Pipt, by great fortuity, at exactly the same moment.

The house was Queen Isomere's avowed destination while Countess Diane only happened on the place by accident because it lay on her direct line of march toward the Ruby City and Sorceress Glinda. There they nevertheless were: all ten of them, counting horses and a dickey bird. And there was no one to greet them.

At least: there was—but not the prime mover, the magician they had expected to meet. His wife was present, only not saying very much. Also Wizard Wam's consort was at home.

Lucinda duly appeared and did the honors: had the whole bunch over to her cottage for elevenses.

"What a remarkable coincidence!" everyone said: "our turning up here at the very same moment. But what an anti-climax to find Dr. Pipt away. Has he been gone long?"

"They left at dawn this day," related Mrs. Wam. "I persuaded them to get a good night's rest first but then they would be off at the crack of dawn. They're probably having *their* elevenses just about now with General Jinjur. Or is she on duty at Mistress



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Glinda's at this time?"

No one knew for sure. "Never mind," pursued the lady of light. "At Stony Stratford they will rest tonight. Tomorrow, or next day, they may be here again."

"I long with all my heart to see Dr. Pipt," sighed Begum Isomere.

"I hear he is much grown since last I saw him," volunteered her Grace of Gillequin. There had been a deal of gossip relayed by local Magicians during the short walk to Mrs. Wam's.

"Alas, yes," confirmed Lucinda. "A small weed has grown apace—and now has grace," she misquoted aptly. "He's so good-looking now, and hates it!"

"Deuced odd," put in Sieur Robert who had gloried in his own good looks ever since they had been bestowed.

"Yes, we would feel it so, wouldn't we?" agreed Lucinda. "Nice looks attract people physically. I for one am so happy with the affection I have been granted. Perhaps it is even so with you, your grace.

"Yet one *has* heard of pretty girls who are impatient with the swains who *will* follow them about whereas they want to be respected for their fine minds. I think it's something like that in the doctor's case. He's not uxorious, and tells of his annoyance at lovely ladies who clustered round him the other time when he was tall and handsome. *He* only wanted to get on with his magic."

The party all laughed at such perversity, and spread more golden syrup on their light-bread. However, such talk was getting them nowhere. Decisions must be made. Were they to sit idly and wait for the return of the cognoscenti? Or wouldn't they be better served by pushing on with their own expeditions?

Nearly everyone opted for the latter, more active undertaking.

The only question, really, was the earlier-arisen one: *Where* should they head for?

The Gillequins had planned to seek out witch Glinda away in the south, but Queen Isomere pleaded so prettily to be

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allowed to pursue her goal of finding Dr. Pipt (known possessor of demarblizing substances) that the rest gave way. They made preparations to proceed to the Emerald City in the tracks of the questing Magicians.

No mean adept of magic by any means was the former Witch of the North. Tacitly given, after the snack, the run of Wammuppirovocuck's laboratory, the rubber woman poked inquisitively and found many a contrivance or ingredient sure to work wonders in the proper hands. Lady Lucinda and the Manfrog were following her about.

"Oh, handkerchiefs, I see!" murmured Diane. Turning to her hostess: "Wizard Wam will of course have taken along a supply?"

"Why, no," demurred Wam's wife. "Naturally I packed for him. But Wam's in good health. Aside from a hanky or two in his pockets he didn't take extras."

"I meant for sleeping under," countered the countess: a bit mysteriously to some, no doubt, but the witch had learned a trick or two from the Wizard of Oz.

"In that case, my dear," she pursued, "would it be in order that I borrow a few?" She was recalling vividly the chilly night outdoors she had just passed — without benefit of handkertent. "They would be returned, of course."

"By all means," urged Lucinda. "Take whatever you like. Wam will be merely grateful for your expert guidance and help."

Thus it was that Lady Diane sent Fred Fruakx to fetch one of her husband's saddlebags and proceeded to fill it with simples and compounds she discovered in bins and drawers, and ranged on shelves, about the workroom. Much of it would be duplications, of course, of items Wam himself had already thought to take along. But the ex-witch sensed that there might be heavy hexing ahead and she hoped to be prepared.

The whole community of Magicia turned out to see off, for the second time that day, a party of persons Emerald-City-bound. Hands were shaken and scarves waved, and the whole bunch were just putting foot to path (it wasn't even a road, this far off

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in the woods) when belatedly, with horn blaring, a scalawagon came bumping and lurching over stones and stumps, out of the copse.

It was Chinda, magician extraordinary, maintaining his former state as Grand Bozzywoz<sup>s</sup> by insisting on being wheelborne even when in retreat in the bucolic depths of the Blue Forest.

“Good heavens,” breathed Countess Diane, when the dust had settled, “do you have scalawagons in Magicia?”

“Only the Bozzywoz,” whispered Lucinda. “He must have slept late this morning. He didn’t appear when my husband and Dr. Pipt set off.”

Chinda, who had descended from his vehicle, must have intuited what the two ladies, so pointedly observing him, were on about. He bowed extravagantly and said, “My heartfelt apologies, Mistress Wam. I had every intention of being present to wish the earlier departers bon voyage. Now when I learned that such eminent personages as these were in town I *had* to make the effort—”

Diane-Orin-Tattypoo broke in with not very much ceremony. She had met Chinda on a former occasion and knew him for a great snob. He might be counted on to do almost anything for a crowned head, so she had no compunction about making the following speech:

“Is it the celebrated Magician Extraordinary, Lord Chinda, sometime Chief Prophet and Seer to his majesty, the Sultan of Samandra? I was sure I recognized you. You won’t know me. In this guise—” she referred to her green rubberness— “I appeared to only relatively few persons many years ago. But I once had the honor to be Tattypoo, regent in the land of the Gillikins. Now I am only My Ladyship, the Countess Diane of Gillequin,” she ended modestly.

“Your *Grace!*” cried Chinda and groveled appropriately.

“May I present you to my husband, Sieur Robert?” Diane went on. “And her lovely highness, Begum Isomere of Seebania?”

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<sup>s</sup> See *The Yellow Knight of Oz*. (Editor’s note)

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and the worthy Prince Ojo." The countess didn't bother with mere commoners.

When the rituals of introduction had been performed, the wily witch continued: "We've all been wondering how to overtake Dr. Pipt and his party in a hurry. We've been riding shanks' mare for a good bit longer than twenty-four hours. The prospect of more of the same is rather daunting..."

It was enough. Twenty minutes later Diane, Isomere, the Manfrog, and Ojo at the wheel directing the intelligent scalawagon were bouncing and bumping in their turn over roots and rocks on their way to join the yellow brick road, while Count Robert and his equerry galloped, and Agnes and Bert the Bird flew lookout overhead.

## C H A P T E R

## T W E N T Y

The Red Wagon flew as fast. Everybody was converging on Stony Stratford.

This little town had borrowed its name from Shakespeare—well, off of the present-day map of England, as well. But it was the Bard you thought of when you were there, not a dreary conurbation of parking lots and factories. This was because it was ‘Stratford in Stone’, a ‘theme’ settlement of live statues acting out the inspirations of the Stratfordian poet.

There Hamlet twirled a skull, Desdemona knotted a handkerchief, and Macbeth brandished a dagger at just about any hour of the day or night. It was a non-stop theatre festival.

Stratford’s population was 1442: just the total of the number of speaking characters in the great plays.

Into this formidable brew of poesy and thespianism plunged all our friends nearly simultaneously: They were so many they had to ‘hire’ a hall. A reproduction of that at Blackfriars proved to be available.

While Mistress Quickly and Steward Malvolio bustled officiously in the background, the Oz adventurers took seats about a central podium, and open house was declared for the purpose of discussing all aspects of what was known about the present plight of their fairyland.

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By general agreement the blue true Woozy was chosen keynote speaker. After all it was he who had made the single most alarming discovery of the present imbroglio, the disappearance of the girl ruler, Ozma.

"That's right," the Woozy declared from the speaker's stand. "We couldn't find her anywhere."

"Really they couldn't," confirmed the wood sprite Lorna.

After that, because the Woozy was so good-natured and easy-going nobody paid any more attention to him, and talk became general; that is to say, they all talked at once.

It was different when the strikingly handsome, tall Dr. Oliver Pipt rose to address the body. Here was a commanding and appealing figure they all instinctively respected. Silence fell over the house as the Straight Magician spoke:

"Now is a winter of discontent," he intoned, "fallen upon our land, though it be spring. "I pray you all: tell me what they deserve that do conspire with damnéd witchcraft and have prevailed upon my body with their hellish charms? Be your eyes the witness of their evil. Look how I am bewitched! Behold, mine arm is like a springing sapling, straightened out!"

This was news only to a portion of those gathered, but General Battles duly chimed in with "'Tis very grievous to be thought upon."

"As I can learn," continued Pipt, "someone hath hearkened after prophecies and dreams and from the cross-row plucked the letter 'P', and for my name of 'Pipt' begins with P, it follows as the day the night that I am he on whom such tribulations needs must fall."

"Not you alone but all of us are struck," interrupted the alert Countess Diane.

"I'm turned to rubber, as once long before,  
While faithful Agnes dragons as of yore."

"And I'm become a human.

This makes twice," submitted Fritz Fruakx.

"I want more uncles here to welcome me!" cried Prince Ojo.

"The one I had: a graven statue, he."

## THE WOOZY OF OZ

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"Right welcome would he be in Stratford street," called Malvolio from the rear.

"Stone people we with satisfaction greet."

"My wife in that case is a dame for you," returned Dr. Pipt,

"Though that she neither walks nor talks be true."

"And what of *my* lord, green Vergrodius?" asked queen Lorna humbly.

"He's disappeared. He's truly gone and well.

I dread this re-enacts my former spell."

"Agreed;" declared chairman Pipt.

"'Tis clear the magics that we suffer from

Are all enchantments from an ear'ler time.

I mean, whatever other shape we owned

By magic means: the latest prior to this

Is now again invoked—to sore dismay.

What force has conjured up this state of things?!

Now let me testify: it is not I!

That here have brought about this paradox.

I could have! I am capable of all.

But did it?: no, I never! by Saint Paul!"

COUNTESS:

"But failing you, who could have compassed it?

With all my former witchcraft I could not.

It must have been supreme ability

Was brought to bear for such a far-flung spell."

COUNT:

"The powerf'lest of Adepts must it be

Who in one swoop inverted a whole land."

MANFROG: "The Wizard!"

ISOMERE: "Glinda!"

WOOZY: "Ozma, Queen of Oz!"

WAM:

"Not reas'nable! To re-enchant themselves?

For as we see, the trio's vanished,

And this can only, likely, be the fruit

Of the one new and all-encompassing

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Enchantment that's afflicted all the land."

SAWHORSE: "I'll buy that."

EQUERRY: "Were those adepts once bewitched?"

COUNT:

"Good heavens, boy, know you not—? But then  
You're young. It may have been before your time."

Here the delightful tableau was broken off by a great wailing, gnashing of (pearl) teeth, and tearing of yarn hair.

"Ay, mea culpa! my forgiveless crime!" shrieked the Patchwork Girl of Oz.

"The author of these wretched mis'ries I'm!"



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

Scraps flung her herbal dolls in a corner. This was more important. What was the production of a never-fade scent in a patchouli puppet in comparison with her newfound ability to change things' shapes, put into trances, levitate, make vanish, and even to bring to life? A whole realm of power seemed opened before her. She was tempted. And she fell.

It had taken her a fortnight to isolate the source of her new ability. It had been clear from the start that the plants from Ozma's magic-herb garden were the source of the girl's competence. They all could produce their little thaumaturgies. Ozma-brand henna could make things change color, and not just to red. Garden balm instantly relieved pain of whatever sort. Hemp produced the most delightful euphoria—though that may not have been a strictly magical effect.

After two weeks of concentrated experiment Scraps now knew what each plant's leaves or seeds or roots could do. But it was that poisonous-green ginghammaseng that was the star of the collection. The girl smiled slyly, but a little uncertainly too. She wasn't altogether sure she liked that herb, despite its wonderful properties. She had already worn out two pairs of cotton-glove hands. That ginseng quickly wore acid-like holes in her 'skin'. Scraps sometimes even imagined the lesions hurt,

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though she was from her origins not programmed to be able to feel pain.

Never mind. The gingemaseng was prepotent. Why, you had merely to bruise a leaf of the living plant while picking it to release a powerful emanation that brought to life, if only fleetingly, dead things in its vicinity. Witness the faun statue that briefly had kept lapsing into fitful life.

Though Scraps wasn't to know, the plant was a volunteer. Ruler Ozma would never have given consent to its proliferation in her garden if she had known. The original seed of this weed must have wafted there in the time of the siege of Oorfene Deuce's wooden soldiers<sup>s</sup> and thriven surreptitiously ever since. It was capable of subtly-altering its shape to look like an ordinary tobacco plant, which of course no one would think of uprooting from a herb-sample garden.

In addition to, when liberally applied in the form of a crumbled powder, being able to bring things to life, the gingemaseng, as a liquid, could cause objects to disappear, while as an aerosol, it was the most astonishing of all: it could wreak *multiple* changes, e.g., alter the shape of things and/or reduce or expand them in size and/or transmute their substance.

To take an instance: in the first days of her experimentation the Patchwork Girl squirted some of the essence on the Glass Cat, who unwisely strolled near. Before you could say 'Bob's your uncle' the cat had turned into a large brass telescope aimed through Scraps' window at the heavens. She spent many an interesting evening studying the stars before the alarm was raised and people demanded to know what had become of Bungle.

It was the obligation to confess that brought about Scraps' downfall... When Princess Ozma learned what she had done she used her Magic Belt to deprive the Patchwork Girl of her useful telescope and restore the self-centered Cat whom nobody much liked anyway.

Scraps fumed. So she was going to be hampered, was she?,

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§ See *The Wooden Soldiers of Oz*. (Editor's note)

## THE WOOLY OF OZ

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in the exercise of her magic, whose means she had happened on perfectly legitimately by honest accident. It was that very night that she crept downstairs and sprinkled gingemmaseng fluid on the Magic Picture.

The joke backfired, however. Now unless you have lost bobby-pins or your place in the book you're reading, weeks can go by when nobody bothers to consult the potent Picture. That was the case now. Since the morning when the interested Ozma had got the picture to show where the Glass Cat was (and in what form), no one had happened to go near the canvas. Consequently nobody noticed the upshot of Scraps' revenge kick.

How annoying for the girl! It was always an overriding motivation of the pied beauty to be *noticed*. Now they not only failed to observe and admire how she had got her own back on the Magic Picture, they also went on treating Scraps herself with marked coolness. All the inmates of the Palace knew magic-working was illegal, yet here she was, making no secret of practising it under Ozma's very nose. She would need, they judged, to have a term in the doghouse.

In her bedroom, surrounded by the trays of drying herbs that had replaced her doll collection in her affections, Scraps fumed anew. How might she wipe their eyes? What grand coup of magic could she bring off that would make them all sit up and take notice?

Then it came to her. That long-mooted clambake at which, in days of innocence, the girl had planned to donate innocuous herbal dolls to people she had effigied: of course! The affair was now set for the seventeenth: an all-day open-house with slumber party to follow. She'd wait until the whole bunch, servants and all, were collected in one enclosed space, then squirt the gathering with ginga-spray and turn them into—what? Just for fun, and temporarily, of course.

What *should* she turn them into? Well, she'd wait for inspiration at the crucial moment. That moment came when, during a lull in the afternoon on the day of the party, Princess Ozma, tuckered out by her exertions as hostess, retired for a nap.

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Everybody else was gathered in the Informal Reception Chamber, watching the Sorceress of the South challenge the able Wizard of Oz at chess.

That was it! She'd change them all into chess pieces for their pains.

C H A P T E R   T W E N T Y - T W O

*SCENE: the Great Hall at Blackfriars (latter-day re-creation)*

GEN. BATTLES: So that was it!? Miss Scraps, aren't you ashamed?

SCRAPS: I've said already! Don't you see my tears?

LORNA: I'm just a little slow. You mean to say

    When spells were reinvoked the Patchwork Girl's  
    Made ev'rybody chessmen once again?

PIPT: That seems to be the size of it. Worse luck!

WHISBY: I can't believe it!: Gen'ral, you and I

    Sat queening it with Glinda in our hands!

GENERAL: My king was Emp'ror Nicholas himself?!

WHISBY: My rooks were Kaggi-Karr and Jackie Daw.<sup>§</sup>

GENERAL: The Yellow Knight of Oz stood on the board.

WHISBY: The Scarecrow as a bishop looked most droll.

GENERAL: Princesses Dot and Trot made pretty pawns—

PIPT: Enough! Of drollness none of us need doubt

    You had sufficient. What is not so droll

    Is that there's no one now we can consult.

    To Emerald or Ruby Cities, then,

    We have no longer need to wend our way.

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§ See *The Good Witch of Oz*. (Editor's note)

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It's up to *us* to save th'endangered day!  
COUNTESS: But can we? Dare we? *My* heart much misgives.  
PIPT: Forgive me, madam. I shall not conceal  
    I have the pow'r to undo any spell—  
        Well, almost any. Studied I for years  
            In order merely now to fail the test?  
Not I! My books and my experiments  
    Taught me, 'mongst other things, the utmost charm:  
        The grandad incantation of them all,  
            The witch's brew to end all witches' brews:  
                In short, that spell they call The Alphabet.

At the naming of the ultimate in wizardly formulae, the crowd all gasped in awe. Goodness, did Dr. Pipt know the secret of The Alphabet?!

COUNTESS: Well done, wise friend.  
    The Alphabet, indeed,  
        Will settle any fell enchantment's hash.  
            But dare we use it? What if it destroy  
                The creatures we would give so much to save?  
PIPT: I think that we must risk it. Otherwise  
    This crazy mixed-up spell will hang o'er Oz  
        Indefinitely. What else can we do?

They could think of nothing. Well, they supposed they might somehow get a message to Fairy Queen Lurline beyond the Great Sandy Waste in the Forest of Burzee. She should be able to manage something. But somehow, one and all, they wanted to steer their own destiny.

PIPT: Well, then: no more but this. Fetch here to me  
    A list of elements I straight shall name.  
LORNA: Oh, goodness, think you we can find them all?  
PIPT: We oan but try. There's twenty-six all told  
    And some are simple. You, your grace, might bring

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Your Lipstick and a modicum of Rouge.

WHISBY: And I? I want to help, but what to do?

I've nothing but the clothes I stand up in.

PIPT: Go fetch. a tub of Water, there's a lad!

And jobs enough for all are to be had.

So it proved. The penitent Patchwork Girl was sent to the kitchens to beg of the cook Cinnamon, Nutmeg, and Vanilla. The Soldier with the Green Whiskers and Egbert Wooly set off in the Sawhorse-drawn red wagon to search the fields for Mustard, Tarragon, and Horse-radish. Count Robert volunteered to trim his horses' toenails (his equerry Roland did the actual work and when the trimmings were cooked with a bit of the water they had Glue. The provisions of Wizard Wam, eked out by those Lady Diane/Tattypoo had thought to bring from his studio, yielded Asafetida, Opium, Pounce, Quinine, Sulphur, and Ylang-ylang. Dr. Pipt himself, as a frequent scribe, could supply Ink.

Surprisingly enough, they had a problem when it came to securing ordinary household Jelly. They'd eaten their brought-along lunchtime sandwiches, so there was none to be scraped up there. Then Whistlebreeches thought a thing: 'Jelly... Jellia....' Before she knew it, (if she was capable of knowing), poor Jellia Jamb, lying in shards in her protective sack, was being stripped of her crystalized hair, which, boiled down with more of the water, provided a serviceable jelly.

Now it was very fortunate that all this was going on in Stony Stratford. Dr. Pipt and his assistants needed a cauldron to mix the magic elixir in and right outside town, on a bit of blasted heath from *Macbeth*, they found just what was wanted in the form of the three witches' hexing kettles. With scarcely a grumble the old dames allowed their own potions to be tipped away and even took turns stirring the pot of Alphabet during the many hours of simmering needed to bring the brew to perfection.

Of equal importance was the fact that Steward Malvolio was able to lead the way to the great storehouse where were lodged all the props required for the various plays. Small items were laid up in great pull-out boxes. In the drawers of *The Merry Wives*

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of *Windsor* they found Eringo. Lying with *Henry the Fifth* was rank Fumitory. *A Midsummer Night's Dream* proved the real treasure house: in its storage box they came across Barm, Knot-grass, and dried Dewberries (in April the fresh ones were as yet not even buds—even in Oz).

The compilation of the witching list took all the next day. Only on the morning of the day thereafter spoke the Crooked (that was) Magician:

“Alas, I idiotically left

The hardest to the last. We yet may fail!

I did not bring along supplies I need

Of three obscure but most important plants.”

The others clamored to know what those might be.

Dr. Pipt read from the dictionary: “Urena, a tropical malvaceous herb having clusters of small yellow flowers, which yields a useful bast fiber.

“Xerophytes, plants adapted for growth under dry conditions...” (Actually, cactus would have done—but are there any in Shakespeare?)

“Zamia, a tropical or subtropical cycadaceous plant having a short tuberous stem and a crown of pinnate leaves.”

Everybody looked paff. They’d never *heard* of such things. But then one clear voice called: “Do not despair! No problem! I have here—” Rubber Tattypoo-Diane drew the strings of her capacious reticule.

“Some bits and pieces I unnoticed stole

From the Herbarium some days ago.

It was a sin, I openly confess,

But justified? by need in this sad mess.”



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

The crowd of Oz adventurers, with many of Shakespeare's characters as extras in the background, stood about in a great circle on the blasted heath and watched as Dr. Pipt and the three weird sisters blew on the great iron cauldron to cool it.

The innocent Woozy asked if the magic brew was ready but people merely shushed him for his pains. It seemed pretty clear to most that adequate boiling had been accomplished. Now it was only a case of getting the concoction cool enough to use.

Again the Woozy sought information, though seeming to answer his own query when he opined that naturally no one wanted to get burnt by sipping the elixir while it was still too hot. At this they asked him if he was crazy. Nobody was going to *drink* a mixture containing Ink, Glue, and Asafetida! Of course not. What would be done was merely to wipe a dab of the magical syrup-consistency fluid upon who/whatever was to be disenchanting. That should do the trick.

An hour or two passed, which was/were not all that exciting. Such a large quantity of the recently boiling brew did take its time to get down to a manageable temperature. Some people took time out for a snack. This the magical stone thespians could scarcely supply. All their provisions (as needed in the various plays) were on the old and desiccated side. So people like Queens

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Isomere and Lorna, with Omby Amby and Whistlebreeches to help, went into outlying fields and harvested from bun or berry bushes and dipped up jugfuls from a cider spring to feed the bunch.

Creatures who needed such took naps. In one way or another the time was passed. It was at about seven o'clock in the evening that magician Pipt gave the word that the wonderfluid was ready.

Attention was at its height. How would application of the formula turn out?! Now, belatedly, people asked themselves: on *whom* would the magic first be tested?

It was here that the worthy Manfrog Fred Fruakx showed his colors. Dr. Pipt had raised high a ladle of the still faintly misting brew and seemed to be going to let fall a drip on his own exposed skin.

Quickly Fruakx pushed through the crowd and stayed the doctor's hand, reminding him that it had been posited that anyone being improperly disenchanting might disappear in a puff of smoke. Fred told the straight magician that he, Oliver Pipt, if anyone, could not be spared. Rather, let some volunteer who was 'expendable' be the Guinea pig and take the risk. He himself had nothing to lose but his existence; (his life, in Oz, could not be lost). The Manfrog would be the test subject.

Everyone cheered and clapped at the selflessness. Some even wiped away a tear. They'd known all along that Fred F. was a right guy.

Let him soon be safely reseen in his old familiar guise!

He was.

No sooner had the rainbow-opalescent drop of Alphabet elixir fallen upon the Manfrog's extended wrist than there came, they thought, a change. The pinkish flesh slowly turned yellow. (The Frogman, a Winkie, had always been a yellow frog: a nice contrast to his dear Gayelette's purple hue.)

The hand became a froggy foot. The hair was gone, the mouth stretched to enormous size, the Manfrog's legs lengthened and crouched low. Most curious of all perhaps: the fellow's costume,

## THE WOOLZY OF OZ

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preserved from the days of his previous manhood and donned on that recent morning at his home pond's edge, altered now, by the 'terms' of this particular witchcraft, to fit his new proportions, so when the retransformation was complete the Frogman stood forth in dapper apparel as he had done of old.

Again the welkin rang with applause.

After that there was no holding them and in less than half an hour Countess Diane, dragon-lady Agnes, Jellia Jamb (looking *rather* odd with a crew-cut, and Dr. Pipt himself were all enjoying the renewed possession of their proper forms.

Much gratified, the joint rescue party took its grateful leave of the hospitable stony Stratfordians, who added to their score in heaven by the loan of three demijohns into which the precious Alphabet liquor was decanted.

Desdemona waved her handkerchief as the troop made its way across the fields to join the road to the Emerald City, while the scalawagon, loaded with the company's luggage and with General Battles at the wheel, slowly brought up the rear.

Dr. Pipt and Whistlebreeches happened to pace together side by side.

"I wonder if we'll make it tonight," one said. "Let's push on until we do," urged the other. "I'd after all prefer to sleep in the Palace rather than under a handkerchief tent again." Presently, "I'm still a little anxious," confessed the crooked magician. "No doubt there'll be *enough* of the magic fluid to disenchant all the crowd at court, but will it work as well as it did on us?"

Whisby was pleased at this show of diffidence on the part of the otherwise sometimes over-confident wonder-worker. He tried to reassure him. "Why shouldn't it? We're all convinced now that it must have been a single general spell that worked all the different enchantments which took place during that one night. If your elixir undoes some of the spells it ought logically to undo them all. "

The Doctor had his rebuttal ready. "The Alphabet, powerful as it is, remains but a stopgap. What we still have to get at is that one great all-encompassing spell you mention, and reverse that.

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We can't, for instance, go around dropping elixir on the *directions* to make them switch back to normal. We're still walking the wrong way, that is, east, towards the Emerald City. We've got to get it back to being west."

"Well, that's true," agreed Whistlebreeches. "But when you've disenchanting the great Adepts, Sorceress Glinda and the Wizard of Oz, they'll be able to advise you, if anybody can."

"'If'," repeated the magician. "If the elixir works," he questioned worriedly.

Whisby stopped in his progress. "Dr. Pipt," he said solemnly, "please put your mind at ease. Here—!" The boy withdrew his hand from his pocket. "It's my lucky piece. It's Miss Jenny Jump, one of those, apparently, who was turned into a chesswoman when the great spell fell. Try your elixir on her. If it works, you probably needn't worry that it might not work for the others."

"Beamish boy!" cried Pipt, delighted. "Why didn't you say so?!"

"She was my lucky piece," Whisby could only repeat. "Now she'll be... common property, so to speak."

So, the complications of halting the caravan, explaining to everybody what was going to be attempted, and unstopping one of the demijohns meant that they would have that night on the road after all. They made a little festivity of it. When the tents had been set up and the horses let out to graze, the company all took seats in a big circle on the grass and watched with never-failing enchantment the disenchantment of one of theirs.

As for Jenny herself, immobilized and unconscious for a week, everything was so new. She'd last been aware by candlelight in the Informal Reception Chamber of the Palace of Magic, fully engrossed in watching the Wizard decide what move to make. Afterwards nothing. Now 'nothing' dissolved to reveal her, by lantern-light, in the midst of a glade, surrounded and gazed at by nobody she had expected to see except the Patchwork Girl and Queen Ozma's maid Jellia.

"Wh—wha' hopped?!" she quoted.

Jellia Jamb ran to the girl's side and seized her hand. "Don't

## THE WOOLY OF OZ

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be frightened, dear," she soothed. "It's all a bit queer, isn't it? We've been under a spell. I was only disenchanted myself a few hours ago. But you're among friends."

"I can see that," returned Miss Jump with spirit. "Oh, there's dear ol' Whistlebreeches. Hi, Whis! But tell me, Jel: what's been going on?"

It was more than unassuming Jellia Jamb could undertake: to explain all the ins and outs.

But she never left Jenny's side while the Crooked Magician and the Countess of Gillequin told the tale.

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

“What I still fail to understand,” said Dr. Pipt, sitting next morning at a card table (literally: it was made, by magic, from one of the doctor’s own calling cards) in conference with ex-witch Tattypoo-Diane and Miss Jenny Jump, while various of their familiars hung about nearby, “is what happened to Princess Ozma. Why did she not become a chess piece with all the rest of you?”

He didn’t really expect unknowledgeable Jenny to supply an answer, but the question needed to be discussed.

“Her Majesty had gone to bed,” related Jenny Jump. “The rest of us, too excited about the great event that was about to take place, hung on in the presence chamber and watched a chess game. Queen Ozma had hinted she might herself do a little enchanting after midnight.”

“But our gracious sovereign,” protested witch Diane, “would never have turned you all into chessmen, even for a joke.”

“No, no,” reminded Pipt. “We’re all agreed: the chessmen caper was all a reversion to an *earlier* enchantment. Yet nor would the Princess have reinvoked such an unpleasant spell... No, what she did — *if* she did — was something else entirely.”

“The thing I don’t get,” put in thoughtful Whistlebreeches, “is why Ozma didn’t turn into a chesswoman herself. She

## THE WOOLZY OF OZ

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wouldn't have had to be together with the others for that to happen."

At this, the otherwise self-effacing soldier with the green whiskers had a word. "Her Grace had never been enchanted as a chess piece before. Maybe that's why—"

"Of course!" The others all struck their brows in dramatic realization. Jenny Jump confirmed the soldier's words. Those who had been chessmen long ago knew well enough who had, and who hadn't, been among their number.

"But Princess Ozma *had* sometime undergone enchantment," affirmed the Countess.

"Oh, more than once," seconded Omby Amby. "One time she was a jade grasshopper—"

"But that was in another country," expostulated Dr. Pipt (who knew his history), "and besides, the—": well, not exactly "wench" nor yet exactly "dead", but the effect was the same. He finished lamely: "—idea seems to be that everything's most *recent* transformation form has been resumed... What was the last time the gracious Queen was enchanted?"

They all put on their thinking caps.

The wizard Wam, no slouch at history either, opined: "It must have been way back in 1917. Of course nobody's dared, since then! She became a peach pit..."

Veils were torn from before veils; "A peach pit!" they all cried.

A moment more and then the puzzled but withal stern eye of General Battles was turned on the dear old Woolzy, who lay gruzzing nearby. "Egbert, old chap," called Battles. "You did clean out Her Grace's room that morning. Did you by any chance observe something like a peach pit in or near her majesty's bedstead?"

"I found the Magic Belt," informed the gormless Woolzy, rising and coming nearer solemnly. "I hung it up in her highness' closet—"

WOT!! They all threw moral brickbats at the poor dopey Wooze. They had turned the laboratory of Wizard Diggs upside down in their search for some magical talisman to aid their

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campaign to right wrong charms—and all the while the supreme instrument of magic hung unregarded in a closet.

But when their indignation had subsided a little the great *But* remained. “But peach-pits!” the crowd urged. “We have reason to think—”

“Not peach pits exactly,” stuttered the thoroughly shamed Woozy. “There *was* something like a little dark almond. I thought the Princess might have taken some fruit as a wholesome snack before retiring—”

“What happened to that ‘almond’?!”

“Wh—why, I must have thrown it out. I don’t—”

“Thrown ‘OUT’?!”

The Girl Ruler of All Oz THROWN AWAY?!



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

The rescue expedition stopped no longer in the Emerald City than the length of time it took to round up a fleet of scalawagons, then they dashed onward into the Winkie country. Nobody wanted to be left out at the thrilling denouement.

As they zoomed along, the wizardly group recapped their scattered impressions and conclusions. "Thrown out"? Ozma of Oz, they'd figured out, had descended from her bedchamber in a wastebasket. In the kitchen, the careful Wooly, still on clean-up detail, had dropped the doubtful fruit-seed into the compost bin. And what happened to compost? Why, Carter Green, the vegetable man, came and collected it reliably once a month, if not oftener.

He'd been that very morning and hauled a load off to his Winkie farm. That's where the worried questers were dashing at this moment.

It was at about eleven o'clock that morning that the fleet drew up at the gate to Bobbin Green, the country home of the Vegetable Man of Oz and his friend and consort Betsy. Betsy in an old sunbonnet was shelling peas on the terrace outside the side door and saw them drive up. She ran to the gate.

"Come in, come in," she cried, and rushed back to put the kettle on.

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When the crowd were settled in deck chairs and on stools about the terrace their hostess served cascanilha and macaroons. These latter were delicious and everyone wanted the recipe. Here it is:

In a large bowl let one kilo of almond paste (marzipan) soften at room temperature. With bare hands knead into the paste 200 grams of shredded coconut, the whites of two eggs, and 2-3 table-spoons of strong coffee or orange juice concentrate.

Oil and dredge four baking trays. Take up the dough in three-fingerfuls, flatten, and lay on trays. Decorate with candied fruit peel and/or sliced almonds.

Bake 12-16 minutes at 330° F (170°C), until cookies well brown on protruding tips. Remove to cooling racks while cookies still limp. Makes about 100 macaroons.

“Speaking of almonds,” quoth Dr. Pipt, “it’s a coincidence but we’ve come here looking for one. Do you happen to have—”

Betsy broke him off at that word: “Plenty: I’m just using up the last of the old crop, running them through the almond-mill. I’ll have the girls put you up a pound—”

“Most kind of you,” murmured the magician. “Actually, I was going to say: Do you happen to have noticed an almond-like fruit seed in Mr. Green’s latest compost haul from the Emerald City?”

Mistress Betsy Bobbin-Green giggled. “I don’t usually go through that garbage with a fine-tooth comb. Carter just ploughs it into the west forty.”

“And has he done so this time?” pursued Pipt.

“Why, I guess so. Is it important?” Silly goose. She might have guessed it was, to bring four crowned heads, as well as a lot of other ones, to her address. But the arrivals *had* been playing reticent, not wanting to alarm the young farmwife. Now the time for discretion was past. “I’m afraid so,” informed the doctor.

“You see, due to a clerical error” (the Woozy didn’t look much like a clerk, but never mind) “we fear that Ozma, queen of all

## THE WOOLY OF OZ

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Oz, has become, shall we say?, discarded—in the form of a bit of fruit waste. It struck us that she might be here, masquerading as a peach pit, you know—”

“Good gracious!” Betsy sprang up, distraught. “Ozma lost!? And here you’ve let me sit playing tea-party hostess... Come on!” With scant ceremony she ran out of the yard, heading for the barn.

“Carter, Carter!” she panted. “Did you notice a peach seed—!”

Carter Green, as vegetable as of old, and Hank the Mule appeared in the barn door. “Howdy, folks,” the farmer greeted kindly. “What brings you here?”

“They’ve lost Ozma!” gasped his lady. “They threw her out in the compost! and they think she might—she *must*—be here! Did you see—”

But again the question was broken off. It did not stand to reason that anyone would ever have noticed, especially when not looking for it, a single peach seed amidst a ton of vegetable waste.

They all traipsed out and stood gazing on the expanse of tilled yellow soil which already, in this burgeoning April, was richly tinged with green.

“She lies out there somewhere,” they said and sighed.

“And we don’t have Wizard Diggs’ Where-is-scope,” added Dr. Pipt, “to even make a beginning on discovering where she is.”

“We’d better return to the Emerald City and fetch it,” suggested Count Robert of Gillequin. So that’s what they did.

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

Quite matter-of-factly they disenchanting all the erstwhile chessmen in the Informal Reception Chamber, then proceeded to the big conference table in the Council Hall.

"I think," said Glinda the Good Sorceress of the South when the meeting had been called to order and everyone briefed, "we could not do better than to consult the Book of Records to learn just *what* has been going on."

"Too true," seconded Begum Isomere of Seebania. "The very thing. But of course that's at your palace in the southland—"

Her son broke in, saying, "But right here we could look at the Magic Picture! That would tell a lot."

"So it would," agreed the red witch. "But did we not learn it had disappeared?"

Wizard Wam had thought that one out. "Just so. Disappeared. But that's all. By the terms of the spell cast by the celebrated Patchwork Girl" —here Scraps twisted her glove hands in renewed remorse—"the great picture was made to vanish but nothing more. No doubt the Picture still hangs where it always did. We just can't see it."

The meeting adjourned to in front of the empty hook in the Hall of the Picture. Dr. Pipt flicked a dab of Alphabet elixir at the wall beneath the hook, and lo: the wonderful painting quickly

## THE WOozy OF OZ

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made its reappearance, as good as gold; better, actually, for our friends' present needs.

The suitably repentant Patchwork Girl was invited to address the picture in rhymed couplets. She said:

"Picture, picture on the wall:

Ozma's gone beyond recall.

Show us where she is, we pray.

We'll go rescue her today."

Smoothly the canvas went all dark—with a slightly yellowish tinge.

"That figures," stated Princess Dorothy, who, restored to her own form, now took over proceedings. "Actually, we knew where she was, in general terms. What we need is specifics. Wizard, it looks like it's your where-is-scope to the fore. Could you collect it? And a few of us will return to Carter's farm. Glinda, I think you, Oz, and I—"

"Hold it right there," spoke a squeaky voice, to everyone's astonishment. "Dear kind Princess Dorothy. I know you are so fair-minded that you will not object to someone's reminding you of how he got kicked out of an adventure forty-one years ago,"<sup>s</sup> said the Woozy. "It's rankled ever since. May those of us who were in on *this* adventure from the start—oh, so kindly—not be allowed to remain and take part to the end?"

"Oh, I suppose so, Woozy," pouted Princess Dot with scant grace. "It'll just mean such a mass of scalawagons tearing up the road to the west—I mean, to the east..."

"So what?!" the merry throng cried, as they all moved to quit the Hall of the Picture. "Oh, please," called a small abashed voice. Heads turned. It was the wood nymph Lorna. "While we're here in front of the Magic Picture may we not look and see where my dear husband is...?"

To the freshly disenchanting chessmen this was a new idea and they looked a question.

"He's disappeared," explained Lorna. "Really he has. I just thought—if we could take a look..."

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<sup>s</sup> See *The Patchwork Girl of Oz*. (Editor's note)

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Dorothy was quick to reassert her leadership and said condescendingly, "Why, of course. Scraps dear, would you be good enough...?"

The Patchwork Girl tickled her brain and then intoned:

"Picture, grant a second boon:

Please be kind and show us soon

Where Vergrodius lies low.

He's a green frog king, you know."

Once more the Picture darkened over completely, though this time with a greenish cast. Poor Queen Lorna was left not much wiser.

But now there must be no more lingering before the famous painting. Bustle! Wizard Diggs ran up the 708 steps to his tower studio and secured the wonderful Where-is-scope. At the same time, Sorceress Glinda, quietly asserting her right to direct her own movements, collected her two girl attendants and made for her swan chariot which had waited patiently on the palace roof for more than a week. "We'll rendezvous at Mr. Green's farm," she called back.

What fun! Again the jolly crowd jostled outdoors to the palace garage (once mainly stables) and quarreled gaily about who was going to sit with whom. There was no denying that a trip by rubber-tired Scalawagon was more comfortable than crashing and banging over cobblestones on the iron-rimmed wheels of the Red Wagon. A quick vote resulted in an invitation to the Sawhorse to ride for once instead of, himself, providing the ride.

"No way," disclaimed Lignum. He would feel very much out of place sitting inside a scalawagon even if it was beside his good pal, the Woozy. He preferred to stay behind in what remained of the stables, socializing in a modest way with Sieur Robert's two fiery chargers. So it was arranged.

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

The mob tramped across the Vegetable Man's west forty, not doing the alfalfa shoots any good at all. They followed the Wizard of Oz who had his eye closely trained on his remarkable Where-is-scope, a device that looked, and was, very like a glorified divining rod. The difference was that you could specify to the 'scope just what it was you were looking for and it would guide your steps to that object and to none other.

Away they traileed, just-seventy-nine yards, to the crest of a faint rise, and there—"Oh, how sweet!" cried Betsy Bobbin-Green.

What was it was so sweet? The crowd stopped up around the girl while the red witch of the south warned nervously! "Watch your feet!"

Betsy was looking at a little green-yellow sprout about three inches tall. "It's Ozma," announced O.Z. Diggs solemnly.

Yes, in that preternaturally fecund season the discarded peach seed, unhampered by any hard shell integument, had sprouted and pushed toward the sun in an incredibly short time. The lost princess of Oz was reborn.

"Quick, Oliver!" instructed Princess Dorothy; as soon as she found out what it was she started calling Dr. Pipt by his given name. "A squirt of your Alphabet soup!"

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But wiser heads were not put off from having their say: the heads of Wizards Diggs and Wammuppirovocuck. "Hold hard!" commanded Diggs. "The situation is unprecedented. Never before, to my knowledge, have we been faced with the disenchantment of a creature that has changed its nature since its spell was cast upon it. Have you ever had occasion to deal with such, Mr. Wam?"

Wam replied obliquely. "As I understand it—correct me if I'm wrong, Dr. Pipt—the Alphabet elixir will unfailingly dispel the enchantment of a fixed entity. Here, however, we have to do with an entity which has developed into another form while under its spell. What are the implications?"

"Quite simple, I should say," murmured Pipt, as he seized the lull of the moment to draw on a red-pepper dope stick. He sneezed voluptuously, then went on. "In the present case I should say we'd get back our beloved sovereign in the shape of a newborn baby."

"Oh, how sweet!" gasped Betsy again—well, all the girls—but they were shushed by cooler, male voices.

"Not so sweet perhaps," opined the Wizard of Oz. "Not one of us has the slightest experience of infant care—Oh, I beg your pardon, ladies"—he countered the indignant glares of mothers Isomere and Orin-Diane—"I should say at the Court of Oz, nobody—" He broke off in embarrassment.

Sorceress Glinda took the words "We grasp your meaning, Wizard. I too feel we would do well to leave the royal seedling to the expert care of Farmer Green. If anyone can give a growing plant professional tending it should be he. Meanwhile, we'll have the time to consider—"

Princess Dot broke in: "Glinda: we still don't know how all this dreadful mix-up occurred. Have we got to wait—oh, years, to find out what happened? And waiting for Ozma to grow up isn't going to cure things like the directions all being turned around so confusingly."

"You're right, Princess," allowed the red sorceress gravely. "I should think we might be well advised to repair, after all, to



## THE WOOZY OF OZ

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the Book of Records. It should be able to give us valuable hints as to what has happened and hence perhaps insight into how to deal with it."

After final fond glances at the tiny plant-shoot that meant so much the crowd solemnly tramped back across the flattened alfalfa to the farmhouse. On the way Carter Green said to witch Glinda, "It's queer, your highness, that I don't seem able to switch my 'modes' any longer from vegetable man to human or vice versa. What do you suppose has happened? Is it anything to do with the current wave of re-enchantments?"

"Very likely, Carter," returned the sorceress. "What if you let Dr. Pipt give you a treatment with his elixir? I don't think it could do any harm."

So it fell out. As soon as Green had had a run under the beneficent Alphabet he resumed his original and normal human shape of a young man. He and his peers came to a conclusion by great coincidence, on that magic night when all old spells were reinvoked, Carter just happened to be in his enchanted shape already. Afterwards he just couldn't get out of it any longer. But now, finally, all was well.

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

A bunch of birds flew south.

They were Herbert Bird, the crow Kaggi-Karr, Jacqueline the jackdaw — and one other. They could fly faster even than Glinda the Good's swan chariot, and they brought the word to the staff at the Ruby Palace to make ready for the triumphal return of their mistress.

Thus, when the fleet of Scalawagons drew up at the carnelian gates all was in readiness and the crowd could go straight to their rooms for a well-needed freshen-up before regathering in the banquet hall.

Glinda breathed a sigh of satisfaction to be back in her own quarters. After sixty strokes of the garnet hairbrush she arranged her auburn locks under a fresh jade-green snood.

The Count and Countess of Gillequin were pleased to be together again, just themselves, in a tastefully appointed bed chamber, and they enjoyed an intimate embrace.

The Wizards Diggs and Wam shared a room, Dr. Pipt and Fritz Fruakx another, the youngsters Ojo, Zippiochogolak, and Whistlebreeches a third.

Lady-in-waiting Agnes and the Patchwork Girl found that they had much in common, living in the palaces of royalty or nobility but being, in their own persons, essentially loners. Three

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other girls, Dorothy, Trot, and Betsy, were delighted to be reunited again. They took turns in the shower, then put on fresh pinafores and spent jolly moments at the dressing table pretending to be really grown up.

Queen Lorna was sharing with Queen Isomere. She too spent time at the dressing table. She'd scarcely had time to unpack since she left home ten days ago. Now she got into the rucksack to survey how much rouge and lipstick she had left since Dr. Pipt's foray.

And so they all met at table and that's when the fun began—or continued.

The cooks had had time to prepare each guest's favorite dish and now the festive boards groaned under the load of crisp ratatouille (preferred by those vegetarians, the Bobbin-Greens), grilled prairie chicken: beloved of the ancient Nebraskan O.Z. Diggs, a haunch of venison for Sir Hokus of Pokes, mulligatawny and curry for the Begum of Seebania, hamburgers for the boys, Oz-cream and marble cake for Trot and Dot, and a great wedge of honeycomb for the Woozy.

But the meal was eaten with some dispatch. That an air of nervousness hung over the gathering could not be denied. Everyone was agog to know what the Great Book of Records was going to reveal.

The moment came at last. A hush descended on the crowd that stood round the lectern where reposed, chained by many links of hammered bronze, the vast compendium of all recorded knowledge.

Sorceress Glinda adjusted the lamp, then leafed back through a number of pages from the present day's entries.

"Ah," she breathed, and sat for a long moment silently reading.

At last she raised her head and looked into the eyes of the devoted friends who stood closest before her. There was puzzlement in the dark red-brown eyes of the witch. "There's no explanation..." she almost whispered.

"Listen:

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“Puissant Ozma, queen and fairy, in loving giving vein celebrates the-Revocation of the Edict of Chants by promulgating the favorite charm of each well-meaning wonder worker of Oz.’ That’s all it says.

“Then there’s a flurry of very short dispatches: reports of apparently, results of Fairy Ozma’s mysterious spell—”

“Like, for instance?” queried Princess Dot. “For instance, ‘Madam Margolotte and Regent Stephen’ —that’s Ojo’s great-uncle, of course— ‘return to stone.’ Not a word more about that.”

“Turning my wife to stone,” broke out Dr.Pipt indignantly, “was never anybody’s ‘favorite charm’.”

“Nor poor Unc Nunkie either,” said Prince Ojo a bit abbreviatedly.

As the good witch just continued to look apologetic, “Oh, please,” pleaded forlorn Queen Lorna, “does it say anything about my husband?”

“Let’s see. Yes: ‘The King and Queen of the Green Mountain are not divided’.”

“Goodness,” put in Dorothy, “I didn’t know the Record Book also records what *doesn’t* happen!”

“But it’s wrong!” protested Lorna. “Vergrodius and I are not together. Really we’re not.” She looked in all her pockets, having by now surmised that Grody had undoubtedly resumed being a little green frog as per her long-ago unlucky stroke of magic. “The book must be wrong.”

“No, it’s not,” insisted Dorothy.

“Yes, it is!”

“No, it isn’t!”

Quarreling would get them nowhere. Meanwhile, discussion had reverted to what on earth—or at least in Oz—could be meant by ‘the favorite charm of wonder workers’.

“Have you got a favorite charm, Oz?” enquired Wammup-pirovocuck.

“I never thought about it in just those terms,” said Wizard Diggs, reflecting. “I dare say, if I had to put the finger on one, it would be the hokus-pokus I brought off an age ago, when I

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encrusted the capital city with those emeralds that give it its name." And indeed, that was a charm that was still—if not "again"—in force.

Someone ventured to ask the great Sorceress of the South if she had any preferred bewitchment. The good Glinda colored slightly. "I am loath to confess it but I believe the greatest good I ever did was when I hexed things so as to counteract the machinations of my sister witches of East and West... though things did get out of hand. I never intended their destruction—"

The crowd covered the sorceress' confusion by all talking at once, each once and now-to-be future adept reminiscing about his or her favorite trick of legerdemain. They all gave ear when Doctor Pipt recounted:

"I have a little incantation I have sometimes distinctly thought of as 'favorite'. It involves magic passes and some work with a tripod and combustibles—"

"How does it go?" they all, agog, wanted to hear.

Without thinking about it, Oliver Pipt began to rattle off the long-familiar rigmarole—then stopped abruptly. "Great Goorikop!" he cried, blanching blue.

"What is it?!"

Stuttering over his own belatedness of memory—or failure of imagination—the Crooked Magician got out:

"Let all dechantments pass away

That have occurred in Ozma's day,

And let each one resume that state

That he (or she) was in of late."

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

It was fairly clear to all now what had happened.

Princess Ozma, queen of all the Ozzes, alone in her chamber at the witching hour on that fatal night had generously sought to make amends for the disenfranchisement of Oz's wonder-workers through so many years. She thought she'd give them all a running (re)start by at once putting into effect the favorite piece of magic-working of every Ozian wizard known to be of kindly kind.

How could the fairy intuit that one well-meaning but vain-glorious magician had already gone far beyond her suppositions and planned (in theory) how he could implement wholesale the restoration in Oz of a myriad of magicalities stymied for so long?

The scenario must, indeed, have been what came to pass. It was the only explanation that 'covered all holes'. And how had the fairy princess compassed it? Why, by the use, no doubt, of the formidable Magic Belt which, ever since she had come into possession of it, had been Her Fairyhood's favorite enchantment device, quite putting in the shade the magic wand she, as a fairy, had formerly employed.

Now it was incumbent upon the 'survivors' to make use again of the Belt in order to undo at least a part of the late lamented fairy queen's well-meaning wish. Anyone in possession of the

## THE WOOZY OF OZ

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belt might control its awesome powers. And who was now in possession of the Magic Belt?

Who but its rightful owner, Princess Dot?<sup>§</sup> (Well, almost 'rightful'. She had picked it up as spoils after the conquest of the wicked Nome King of (under-)Ev.)

All eyes turned to Dorothy. In point of fact she was even now *wearing* the famous belt. She buffed her nails on her lapel and thought of herself as a pretty cool person.

With her finger-ends now tidy she laid all ten of them upon the magic cincture and started to speak.

Then she faltered. "Oh, dear," she murmured—and a second afterward snatched her hands from the belt in sudden affright. "What am I supposed to say? I can't just wish Ozma's spell undone..."

"Oh, gracious, no," put in Sorceress Glinda hastily. "Think of Princess Ozma herself. Things have gone too far—"

"Here, Glinda!" spoke Dorothy with firm resolve and unclasped the great talisman. "You do it. You'll know what to say."

The motion was carried by popular acclaim. Glinda accepted the commission and then announced that, once having had time to take into consideration all the aspects of her duty, she would enact the charm in the privacy of her own closet.

"While I'm about it," she said, "are there any other legitimate wishes that ought to be granted? while we have the use of this most potent periapt..." Not that her hearers knew what a periapt was, but they got the idea.

Everyone thought hard, then all came to the surprising conclusion that no, there wasn't anything they wanted which, in perfect Oz, they didn't have already. Well, the Woozy thought it would be neat to have his own special row of beehives in the herb garden at the Palace of Magic. But that was, he concluded, too trivial a desire to be entered as a codicil in this present majestic act of spell-unbinding.

Then Prince Ojo, diffidently and with belled hat in hands,

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§ See *Ozma of Oz*. (Editor's note)

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stepped forward. “Kind Lady Glinda,” he began, “there *is* a wrong long left unrighted. No, not even a ‘wrong’ exactly. Just a misfortune—that has blighted a whole life. I wonder: could you squeeze in a bit of extra magic that would make it all right?”

The red witch was struck by the solemn tone of the young prince. “Surely, Ojo,” she replied. “Tell me of this wish.”

Ojo, used from childhood to long sessions of sweet silent thought, had contemplated well what he wanted to say. “It’s my Unc Nunkie: Regent Stephen in the raj of Seebania. My great-uncle, really. And he is a great uncle! But something happened long long ago when he was a child that has cast a shadow over his life. He’s always been... withdrawn.”

That was the word—and Glinda knew it; knew much more and, though not a mother herself, knew of the trials of childhood. “Oh,” she sighed, “poor children everywhere. Theirs is potentially the most tragic position in life: possessing the physical ability to enact things but without—yet—the judgment to know whether they should or should not do those things.

“There’s a horrid little verse that sums up the situation in sick-joke fashion:

“Willie drowned his little sister.

She was dead before we missed her!

Willie’s always up to tricks.

Ain’t he cute?... He’s only six!”

The listeners to the sorceress’ words gasped in shock. How perfectly dreadful!

But Glinda had not finished speaking. “Yes, little children, in a fit of pique—or just or naughty fun—can push a sibling into a river—or a swimming pool. That moment when the little one cries ‘Mom!’, falling and calling for the one who’s loved the most, the one who always protects—and she’s not there: that moment is for the young murderer the beginning of wisdom. But by then it’s too late.

“Or say: children brought up in the cult of the gun. Proud fathers by implication teach that it’s all right to shoot anything that moves in field or forest.



## THE WOOLY OF OZ

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“Or in the schoolyard, extrapolates the child, who still has judgment to learn. Bang, bang, bang—and the teacher who gave too much homework is paid off for his or her sin. The lifetime in prison—or five years (to save government expense): does that make it all right once more?

“Of course not. The harm we do can never be undone. This is the more pitiable in the case of children, who more often than not simply don’t grasp the unacceptability of their acts.

“Afterwards, there is only one course that has any charity in it. That is: forget.

“Your Uncle Stephen, I give you my word, will never more remember... Do you think that will do, Prince Ojo?”

“Thank you. Thank you.” Ojo the Lucky was crying but content.

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## C H A P T E R

## T H I R T Y

The group of queens, countesses, princesses, et cetera, went for a stroll in the Pink Palace gardens while they talked about all that had come to pass. Now, in late April, in that southern clime, the borders were ablaze with poppies, tulips, carnations, zinnias, pinks, salvia, roses, clover, peonies, camellias, petunias, in short, every flower that has a red variety.

"When do you think Mistress Glinda will do the disenchantment?" wondered Queen Lorna.

"It's hard to say," returned Countess Diane, as she broke off a spray of dark purplish-red lilac. "Glinda's so thorough. She won't want to let a single contingency go un contemplated. It might be days."

Lorna sighed.

Then a little bird perched on her shoulder and said, "Whatcha doin'?"

"Oh, hello, Bert," said Lorna with a wistful smile, and noticed that his other bird companions were fluttering and cawing nearby. "Nothing much," she replied to his question; "just thinking of my Grody, I guess... missing him; wishing he were here."

"Speaking of missing," put in Orin-Diane, "weren't there four of you birds on our expedition? Where's the other one?"

## THE WOOLY OF OZ

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“Oh, the little grey dove,” said Bert. “Why, he stayed behind the time we were at farmer Green’s. Said he had a job to do there.”

“Who was the dove?” pursued Diane.

“It’s a little mysterious,” returned Bert. “He never would say. But he was with us from the time we were at Dr. Pipt’s.”

“Curious,” said the countess thoughtfully.

When the ladies returned to their rooms, two at least had a surprise in store. Isomere and Lorna walked in together, then the begum exclaimed, “Good gracious, there’s a man in our room!”

Lorna, one step behind, took a look, shrieked, “Dearest!” and rushed to throw her arms around King Vergrodius who started up from a chair by the window, looking just a *little* odd in his wife’s peignoir.

Queen Isomere discreetly withdrew and went to see young Ojo in his room. The reunited pair from the Green Mountain had *so* much to say and explain—once they got through hugging. “But, darling,” burred Lorna. “How—what—I don’t understand. Really I don’t: I can see your spell is off. Mistress Glinda’s done her job. But where were you all this time?”

“Right here with you.” The king smiled and looked like Claude Rains.

“With me?!” His wife paused. “The big book did say we were not divided...” Come to think of it, *she* looked a bit like Bette Davis. “But I couldn’t make out at all...”

“When you packed to set out on your quest to find me,” divulged her husband, “I crept into a corner of your rucksack. You carried me on your back through thick and thin.”

“Heavenly days!” breathed Lorna. “It’s true, I never had much occasion to get into the sack, once I got going—”

“In fact,” laughed her spouse, “you never once left it open and untended until you—we—got here. But when the bag lay on your dressing table here, I saw my way clear to crawl past your step-ins and make-up kit. I was out and waiting for you when all at once there came, I found, a change!

“Suddenly I was too big to be sitting on your vanity table—

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and too undressed! I looked about and scrambled into your dressing gown."

Lorna laughed too in sheer relief. And besides, Grody did look ridiculous. "We must see about getting you some duds. I wonder who we should ask."

"The Frogman is along on your junket—I could hear," averred Vergrodius. "He might—"

"Yes, and he's made the switch the other way," broke in his wife. "From man to frog."

"He'll lend a sympathetic ear, in any case," agreed the green king, "even if he didn't bring along any spare human wardrobe."

It was while the pair were making their way to Fred Fruak's quarters that the Woozy came galumphing along the corridor and called as he passed: "Emergency meeting! In the Great Council chamber. By order of Glinda the Good...!"

"Gosh," wondered Lorna. "What can that mean?"

But the royals of the Green Mountain lost no time in speculation. They made their way as directed. Modestly they took seats in the back of the hall.

Witch Glinda ascended the podium looking a bit flurried. Without omsweep she announced: "I was glancing (as I do frequently) over the latest dispatches in the Record Book when my attention was caught by this:" She read from a slip of paper.

"Ugu the shoemaker has taken over Ozma of Oz."

Sensation in the council chamber!

"Ugu! Great Goorikop! We haven't thought of him in ages," several voices cried.

That was just wheel-spinning. It was left for the Crooked Magician to say something germane. "Ugu? He lives at Magicia, though granted: he never takes much part. Come to think of it, I don't know what became of him—"

"Never mind," interrupted Glinda. "I believe speed is of the essence. We'd better get ourselves—at least some of us—back to Carter Green's farm pronto." The Sorceress too could lapse into the vernacular.

'Some of us'? Nobody had any intention of being left out

## THE WOozy OF Oz

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of-this contretemps. The Woozy led the way in a stampede to the Scalawagons.

Two hours of burning up the road brought the gang to the gates of Bobbin Green. They dismounted, burst through, and galloped over the alfalfa which was just daring to raise its 'head' again.

There was the Sorceress of the South already seated in her parked swan chariot, and opposite her a curious little man. He was skinny and old and ugly, and looked additionally odd through the fact that he appeared to be wearing some clothes of the Vegetable Man that were too big for him.

Glinda waved. "It's all right," she called. "The Book of Records as usual got it a bit cryptic. This is Mr. Ugu, sometime shoemaker/cobbler, magician, wicker-worker, and at intervals a dove.

"Come closer," the witch urged when people hung back. Ugu's reputation was not good. "He's quite harmless. Ugu really got religion back in 1917 and has been inordinately pious ever since. He asserts that the present plight of our beloved Girl Ruler is in the last analysis his fault. He's vowed to stay at her side and watch over her in her present peach seedling form until her spell is done..."

At that the expeditioners took heart. Some even dared to ask questions. "What'll it be like, Mr. Ugu? Is Ozma just going to stay a tree forever?"

"Oh, no," hastened the cobbler to declare, in a scratchy, old-bachelor voice. "But indeed she must grow to maturity."

In the years of retirement at Magicia Ugu had made it his full-time employment to study horticulture (almost as if he had a presentiment of what lay ahead), and also the mechanics of peach magic.

"When our dear sovereign," the reformed enchanter went on, "bears fruit, the cycle will have been completed. There will be another peach with its pit, and that will be she again."

"A peach," put in Whistlebreeches bluntly. "If Queen Ozma is normal, she'll have a lot of peaches at once. Will they all be

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Ozmas?"

The wizard O.Z. Diggs was fascinated by the concept. "Clones of our dear princess!" he sighed. "Think of it. Say the crop is—oh, twenty-two peaches in all. When they have been converted—by Dr. Pipt's Alphabet charm or by Princess Dorothy's magic belt—into each her own Ozma again, we'll be able to send one Ozma to each of twenty-one countries of the land of Oz to be its own special royal ruler." The Wizard appeared quite starry-eyed at the captivating thought.

"But which one will be the *real* Ozma?" wailed Dorothy. "I couldn't love a Princess Ozma that had been mass-produced."

"Do not be concerned, your grace," soothed Ugu. "We can discount those posited twenty-two royal princesses. But one fruit of all her yield will have a golden shell to its seed. By that token shall ye know her."

Well. Gratification was great. The crowd murmured and conferred.

Betsy ran to the house and Trot and Jenny Jump followed. Presently they came back again bearing trays of cider and macarons. The Ozites began the Interregnum with a party on the ground, gathered round the dainty seedling in which all took so great an interest.

"But gosh," said the Woozy all at once. "Mr. Ugu, how long will it take before Princess Ozma has fruit?"

"Oh, the normal interval," stated the magician. "And I assure you, our beloved ruler is in every way normal. From seed-planting until first harvest is about five years."

"Heck," squeaked the Woozy of Oz, and seemed quite downhearted. "That means there won't be another new Oz book for five years!" Because you can't have a proper Oz book without Ozma in it!

Can you?

Lund  
9 June 1991 - 12 May 1998

