

a
fairy Queen
in

Oz

*founded on & continuing
the stories by*

MARCH LAUMER

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This book
is dedicated
with appreciation
to
Howell V. Calhoun
to
Mr. Charles Regal
and the staff of
Matson Navigation Company
and to
Sallie Keller
my loyalest fan

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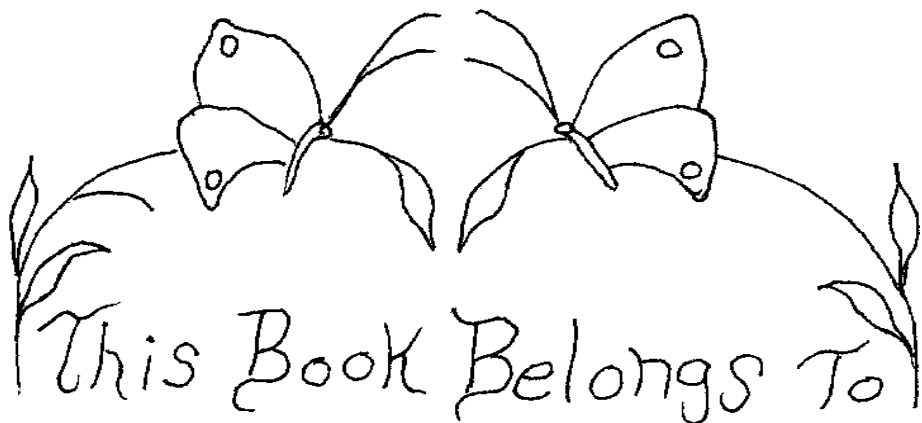
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This Book Belongs To



It was her birthday and Lulea, queen of the fairies was opening the letters of felicitation that had come in from all over. Of course, being a queen, she didn't open them herself but reigned on her toadstool throne and let Feebimble and Ereol and Ozzod and the others do that, but when there would be an especially fun one they would read it out to her. Then the Queen would laugh merrily when some conceit pleased her or shed a sentimental tear when something touched.

"Now here's one!" said Ozzod, impressed by the blue and yellow letter paper. "Embossed and all—"

"Pass me that one, my dear," said Lulea and yawned delicately.

"Oh, very well, your grace," said Ozzod, cheated of her chance to hold—a tiny limelight while reading the letter aloud.

"Hmm," said the queen when she had scanned the missive—not aloud. She held the letter by one narrower end and waved it like a flag. Her attendants looked at each other and wondered what whim of the Queen's was this.

Finally Ereol dared to speak. "May we share with Your Maaajesty...?" she drawled.

"I suppose you must," begrudged the queen. "I'd like to keep

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it a mystery and tease you, but I dare say I'll need your help... perhaps even your concurrence."

The fairies were used to these ploys by their doyenne to introduce a little surprise and color into their actually rather monotonous lives. It's a little dull when you're an immortal and cannot possibly suffer any discomfort, let alone pain or constraint, that you do not specifically choose to suffer—and of course you don't. So life is JUST uninterrupted beer and skittles—or, in the fairies' case, dewdrops and magic-working—and it gets tedious.

Fairies can eat or not, just as they like, with no ill effects. They can sleep or not. Cold or heat mean nothing to them. There is nothing that can touch them, physically, that is. Only spiritually can they be got at, and that not easily. Hence, in order to get to feel anything at all, they had to make up little traumas for themselves. Lulea, oldest of the group, was also the most experienced in trying to manufacture surprises and suspenses and mysteries to keep her followers entertained. The others recognized the present scene as one such attempt.

In a moment, Ereol, placing to one side her bejeweled vanity case and adjusting her mauve pinafore, said: "I must give my spirit a polllish" (for which she normally used a patented preparation), and she did so with a fold of her pinny.

Over the centuries each of the thirty-one fairies of the band had developed her own idiosyncrasy—just to tell her apart. Fairy Ereol's was to play the coquette and to devote much attention to her appearance. Since it took her no more than five hours a day to arrange her face, hair, and dress, she spent the rest of her active hours in attention to what she fondly alluded to as her "spirit." This she did because of course she could not speak of her 'soul,' a fairy being by definition "in folk lore a tiny immortal inhabiting woods and fields and pictured as beautiful and delicate, like humans in appearance but possessing no soul."

Of all Queen Lulea's fairy band Ereol was the one who missed this possession the most and her whole life was filled up with trying to pretend she had one. Yet never having experienced soul she didn't know what form it took or whether it was something

one only felt or was an attribute more substantially present. Ereol preferred the latter conception and her "spirit" could be plaited, varnished, woven, currycombed, preened, marcelled, brushed, massaged, shampooed, polished, or put up in curlers just as she felt inclined.

Thus this particular sprite was able to keep herself continuously busy. Her ruse for the relief of tedium came particularly into play in situations such as now when Ereol felt her dignity threatened by her sovereign's reluctance at once to admit her followers into her utmost confidence.

"Polish away, dear," said Lulea complacently and stuck a (non-habit-forming) ambrosia-flavored dope-stick between her lips as Ereol made some ambiguous passes with the corner of her pinafore. (No one quite knew where the fairy's spirit was located and any vague gesture with cloth, brush, or curling-iron was accepted as being a swipe at the said spirit.)

After this digression there was a return to the topic at hand. "Yes, you see," went on the Queen, "this is an invitation—as well as a felicitation—"

"An invitation!" cried her court as one. They loved to be invited but in fact it happened rather seldom, as most people were too much in awe of the fairies to think of asking them to anything, or else didn't know how to go about it.

"Indeed," said Lulea. "It's from the Governor, Mayor, and corporation of a town in Sweden—"

"In Sweden!" exclaimed her attendants.

This perplexed them very much as they had heard that if there was any place in—or out of—the world that would know nothing of, and take no interest in, fairies, it would surely be Sweden. So cold, so blue, so unmagical.

"Yes, it's quite remarkable, isn't it?" Lulea smiled whimsically. "However, there's a reason for it. But the thing is: I'm tempted to accept—"

"O, do! your Feyness," burst out her fairies-in-waiting, for if there was one thing they wanted more than another it was for their beloved leader to have a good time.

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"You encourage me strangely," said the queen. "I might almost find it in my heart to obey your urging."

"Oh, do," repeated the thirty fairy voices. "Pretty please," they said, just to make it irresistible.

"Done!" declared the queen. "I'll go. Oh, but wait: I can't go on my own."

When the fairy band heard that they were quite overcome. It was centuries, in some cases, since they had been out of the Forest of Burzee or other fairy lands forlorn. Some of them could not recall *ever* having gone abroad. Goodness knows they had longed to often enough but the occasions for it had been so limited and Lulea, the pace setter, seemed ever content merely to lead her maidens in dance, direct them in song, and occasionally produce a little excitement with some original and inventive magic-working. Yet the truth was that the greater number of the girls were just too well endowed mentally to be able to find contentment in only and always fleeting the time carelessly. The thought of travel remained ever in the back of their minds as an apparently never-to-be-granted ideal.

Would it, could it, be possible that some, any, *one* of them might get to accompany their Queen to Europe?! Some of the fairies went into actual tizzies at the thought.

Blow the wind westerly, westerly.

Well, never mind telling it to do that. It did it all the time anyway. Had been doing it, in fact, ever since the Earth decided to spin in a west-to-east directly, The winds, caused by drag on the would-be inertia of earth air, followed along in the direction of planetary spin and once they got going there was no stopping them. There might be little temporary cessations of perceptible blow and there were relatively brief local occurrences of wind from north, south, and east, but by and large winds were always westerly.

As regards the land of Oz, the result of this—and other—tendencies was as follows: those western winds blew across a wide—and deadly—desert and then came to the magic land dry. They had no moisture to bring. On the contrary, they were arid *absorbing* winds and, far from dumping rain on the western Winkie land, they tended to suck up what moisture they found in the yellow country, rendering the latter what it has remained: the driest part of Oz. There the yellow sun shone incessantly (by daylight): that was appropriate too in that xanthic land.

The wind kept on blowing and of late years it had blown

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harder, and drier, than ever. Populations out in the great world complained of unseasonable and long-lasting droughts, and in Oz it was no better. Where once yellow grass grew yellow winds blew. Winkies observed that grass straws powdered into dust; thus it was also with the earth wherein the grass grew. The never-stopping air currents picked up the yellow dust and carried it eastward. As the land of the Winkies grew drier it also grew greater in extent.

The shape and size of the constituent countries of Oz had always been determined by something as unchanging and peaceable as the color of the earth. If you leaned and scooped up a small wad of red clay from the ground and pressed it into the hand of your passionate friend, saying: "Yes, there is something you love better than me, though you may not know it," well, you were either in Georgia or in the red land of the Quadlings of Oz. If you scratched through the blue grass to reveal blue mould you knew you were in Munchkinland and not Kentucky. And everywhere that the ground was yellow was clearly a part of the land of the Winkies.

Ordinarily this state of affairs led to no confusion or dispute. The purple particles of Gillikin-land did not budge from where they had been deposited by the hand of Nature. The blue and red earths of the other lands, the green fundament of the Emerald country, remained where they were. But now for the first time, at least in living or historical memory, the same could not be said of the friable soil of the land of the Winkies. It did not stay put. It mounted in quantities equaling some tons a day—when the breeze was at its best—and wafted eastward mile after mile 'til it settled as a film of fine dust over everything unenclosed.

That didn't bother the Winkies much. They were used to it. It was tiresome having to dust and mop so frequently but there was nothing *disturbing* about it. But the situation was different in the lands that bordered on that of the Winkies.

The Emerald City was too far in the interior to be much affected but the fine powdering of yellow dust upon the red earth of Quadlinga and the purple soil of the Gillikins had far-reaching,

and very differing, results. Quadling red and Winkie yellow blended to make an orangeness of earth that grew more and more pronounced with the stealing years. The upshot of this tendency, as well as of other factors, has been recounted elsewhere.*

In the north the effect was in its way more disturbing. For one thing there was a perceptibly greater strength to the prevailing winds up there. More yellow Winkie dust and sand got dumped on Gillikinland than in regions more southerly. Then, the widespread mountain ranges of the northern land, highest in all Oz, caught and precipitated the dust, confining it to the western rim of the country. Yellow dust upon purple soil produced a nondescript shade of grey-brown. But that didn't last too long. As the centuries passed the yellow overlay grew deeper and deeper. Passing generations forgot that far down underneath the earth was purple. The upper soil, many yards deep, was yellow. Little by little the Winkie border in the north crept eastward. Still, it happened so gradually that nobody got excited.

It was only when Oz began to be "opened up" in the beginning of the twentieth century with the arrival of Miss Dorothy Gale, the return of the renowned wizard, O.Z. Diggs, and then the virtual streaming in of other 'outlanders' that attention came to be focussed on the cartography of Oz. Professor H.M. Wogglebug, T.E., toyed for years with the idea of undertaking a grand-scale mapping of the country.** Though the project was postponed from year to year the professor did get put together a rough and ready outline chart, locating many of the by-then discovered curious countrylets of Oz and tentatively sketching in the boundaries of the larger lands. This last he did by placing a ruler on a drawing of a large horizontally oriented rectangle with a green spot at its center and tracing a big X. That was indeed sufficiently rough and ready.

But it wasn't good enough.

One day a letter arrived at the Palace of Magic in the Emerald

* See *The Magic Mirror of Oz*

** See *The Great Map of Oz*. Editor's notes.

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City for Princess Ozma. This was a daily occurrence. Indeed, on some days the lovely Girl Ruler's fan mail amounted to five or even six letters. Mostly, however, they were much the same:

"Dear sweet Princess Ozma,
You are the dearest and sweetest. At least, I think so.
Your devoted subject forever,
Deera Swiety"

or

"Ray, 'Ray, 'Ray for Queen Ozma! We think you're the greatest—even if you were once a boy.
Signed, Cheerleader Gang of
East Munchkin High"

or

"Most Honored High Potentatress of Oz and surrounding deserts,
I am your humble subject. I am not worthy to kiss the hem of your expensive gown. You have everything. I have nothing. Please send me a diamond ring. I enclose 2 ozlings for postage.
Yours truly, Fawn N. Gruvvle"

But the letter that came that spring morning was a little different. It said [spelling sic]:

"Deer Pwinsess, How iss oo? [The writer had clearly been reading too much *Sylvie and Bruno*.]

I iss fine. At leest I whirl—tilll I looked at oo map of Oz. I iss a Winky. I lives in the NORRTH of Oz. I can tel cawse when I looks out the windo at the sunwise it's all sand on the lefft. That's a dezzert! But on oo map it shose I'm a Gilly Ken. PERPLE! I iss all confoosed.

I loves oo.

Lana Peethisaw

P.S. I iss 5."

Princess Ozma had to smile indulgently. "How odd," she murmured. "I wonder what she means." And she sent for a copy of the Processor's sketch-plan of her queendom.

Yes, just as the girl ruler was quite sure she recalled, the boundary line between the Gillikins and the Winkies was shown to run arrow-straight to the far northwestern corner of the land. There was no way you could be a Winkie, at home, and look toward the rising sun while discerning a desert on your left. Winkieland was pretty dry but it hadn't yet turned into an actual sandy waste. But that reports indicated it was on its way to so doing was a worry. The whole matter was worth a look-see. "Maybe I'll just go and pay a visit to this Miss Peethisaw," the thoughtful regent murmured on.

Queens can't go anywhere on their own, of course. Lulea, queen of fairies, had stated that axiom. I'm not sure why it is but it seems that solitariness is considered less noble, less worthy, than constant attendance by adoring followers. The bigger the train of courtiers the more impressive, of course, but even the most minor, the most private excursion by a ruler must see at least one attendant on hand. Not just to carry a handbag either, or do anything at all menial. Simply to be there.

So who should just be there in this instance? The Queen of Oz thought for a moment and then said to herself, 'Why, the Professor, of course!', and to her maid, Jellia Jamb, who was standing nearby—to carry handbags, or to serve cups of tea, or to deliver letters, or whatever"—: "Please get in touch with Professor Wogglebug at the College, will you, Jellia? and ask if he can spare a few days to take a little jaunt with me."

Ozma would go by swift Sawhorse, naturally, and the wogglebug, IF he was available, could fly along on his own wing-power. That would leave room on the strong wooden steed for something else, should such be wanted and of course the more was the merrier. Somebody *light*.

Well, who could be lighter than the favorite old Scarecrow? He weight all of eleven pounds, bran brains and all. That wouldn't tax the Sawhorse's strength. Would the wise Scarecrow, as advisor, be willing to come? Ozma thought so.

“Then be it so,” quoth the Queen of the Fairies, “and go we to determine who they shall be that straight shall post to Ludlow.”

“‘Ludlow,’ your grace?”

“Oh, sorry, I meant ‘Luleå’.” The fairy blushed slightly.

“‘Loolly-oh,’ your grace?” Feebimble was insistent.

“Oh, bother,” said the Queen, employing the vernacular. “I meant to keep it a secret a while longer.”

“‘A secret,’ your grace?” Feebimble was getting tiresomely repetitious.

“Yes, well, you see, the place—the people—who have invited me are the leading lights of a town called ‘Luleå,’ spelt L-U-L-E-A-with-what-looks-like-a-circle-over-it. I don’t think that’s just a flyspeck. No, see here?: the postmark? The little circle is repeated there.”

Feebimble, and the others, had been trying to picture the spelling in their minds but not succeeding very fast, but when they saw the cancellation stamp on the blue and yellow envelope they gasped. “Great fays!” they cried. “Your Majesty’s own name!”

“Almost,” said Lulea and smirked gratifiedly. “Actually,” said the queen, who was a tick more knowledgeable than any in her

band and happened to know that ‘a’ and Swedish ‘å’ are two as different letters as ‘o’ and ‘q’ or ‘f’ and ‘e’, “the final letter is not quite the same—but near enough. It’s quite a coincidence, isn’t it?”

“‘Coincidence,’ nothing,” said Moth, who was rather apt to blurt things out. “This town has clearly named itself after you, Your majesty! What a charming gesture. Isn’t that what the letter says?! I’m not surprised you want to go see your namesake.”

As a matter of fact the letter had seemed to the queen more (and very) curiosity-arousing than strictly flattering. Perhaps that was partly the reason she had not at first been too keen to divulge all its contents. It contained phrases like “the very startling similarity of names” and “we would be very much gratified if you would present yourself—” She sidestepped Moth’s question and said, “Indeed, I am *most* curious to see what Luleå is like.”

“And will your majesty not choose on an alphabetical basis the servants who will accompany you?” asked Aaala, the Hawaiian fairy. (Fays from widely dispersed parts of the world had been recruited in those ancient days when the Forest of Burzee was getting together its resident fairy band.)

“Oh, surely not!” cried Zyzzyfer, dismayed.

Eapa and Ereol were not averse to the alphabetical choice, figuring that at least a dozen would be called and they stood a good chance of squeezing in. But Mab and Titania (some of the sprites had not hesitated to take the names of colleagues celebrated in other contexts) were not at all satisfied with any arrangement of that sort.

“Surely the Butterfly Band are most worthy to bear Queen Luleå’s train,” ventured Moth, speaking for a special sorority within the larger congregation of fairies. At that, a dozen voices were raised in confirmation.

“Propriety demands it,” stated Farfalla in no uncertain terms and Butterfly herself said, “Dat’s de troof if Ah evah huhd it!”

Then Squash and Dreamsweet and Seventeen and finally the rest of the thirty got into the act, all clamoring to be heard and advancing their claims to be, if anyone, taken along on the expe-

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dition to Sweden. They wrangled for what seemed hours and then went back to plan A. By then the gypsy's dose was taking effect. The crowd simmered down and paused to wonder at their recent excitement.

"This honeydew is potent stuff," murmured the queen. "Remind me to lay in a new supply the next time Nantalengro passes this way."

Feebimble, who usually served as secretary, made the indicated note. "And plan A, your grace?" she said, goose quill raised.

"Why, that the whole importunate crowd of you be assigned to go with me," quoth Lulea with a laugh that was almost a groan.

"Grand!" said Moth, highly gratified.

"The only eqqquitable thing," agreed Ereol.

"At least it means *we'll* all get to go," said Farfalla, looking around at her sorority sisters.

"As by right," second Borboleta.

"Anyone can understand that," affirmed Papillon.

"Raht! Ah kin unnerstan' it," exclaimed Butterfly.

"It's far from obvious," stated Squash pettishly. She was by no means resigned to the Butterfly Band's assumed hegemony. She thought her own little group much more important and Marrow, Gourd, and Calabash agreed with her.

"Never mind," said gentle Espa. "What are we going to wear? That's the important thing."

A veritable chorus of shrieks set up as each lady fay announced what wonder her wardrobe was going to provide.

"I shall wear my green organdie," said Heartsease.

"And I my tailored navy," told Titania.

"Won't that be a bit severe, dear?" asked Mab.

"That's nothing," declared Zyzzyfer. "I'm going in my neat little black."

"Great fays!" ejaculated Petalutha. "A fairy in black! That *will* look odd."

"I shall appear all in silver," announced Dreamsweet.

"That will be lovely, darling," assured her admirer Dib. "Would watermelon pink do for me?"

"It will be enchanting."

"I can't decide—"

"—have to be altered—"

"Can it be ready in time?"

"And for evening wear?"

"Are elbow gloves in this season?"

"I always catch cold with bare shoulders."

"They say they're wearing fichus..."

And so it went on for many hours, far into the night.

c h a p t e r

f o u r

"Hey!" squawked Billina, the yellow hen.

"Are you referring to my insides?" asked the Scarecrow.

"Not exactly," called the hen, running toward the stopped Sawhorse. Ozma held the bridle and displayed an indulgent smile. "I thought your insides were mostly straw anyway."

"Well, they are," confessed the scarer of crows, "but I always admix a bit of hay—for body, you know, and bouquets hay smells nicer than straw, which in fact doesn't smell of much of anything."

"Be that as it may," dismissed the hen, "where are you off to?"

Ozma took up the word. "We've received puzzling reports about the territorial extent of the Winkie country. We plan to see just what the situation is."

"Can I come too?" Billina boldly invited herself, and made a snap at a winged insect. She missed—and looked bewildered. It wasn't that her eyesight was failing due to age. The hen was careful to invoke daily the non-aging clause in the Oz constitution. But the fact remained that she had taken for a vagrant ladybird a foot above her beak the circling Professor Wogglebug twenty yards up in the air.

She tried to brush off the incident and regain poise by bus-

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ting forward and going into an extended spiel:

“Winkie Country? Hmph! That’s MY country, if the truth were known. If chickens could be queens I might have been chosen to rule over the Winkies—rather than that tin fellow, who isn’t even yellow.”

“Oh, no, he’s not yellow,” confirmed the mentioned one’s great friend, the Scarecrow. “There’s no one braver than Nick Chopper—unless it be the Cowardly Lion.”

“Hah!” laughed the hen. “Touché! You’re right, he’s no more yellow than you’re blue,” and she eyed the Scarecrow’s Munchkin suit askance.

“No, I try to keep merry and bright,” admitted the straw (and hay) man. “What’s the use of worrying? It never was worth while.”

“Too true. But seriously: Queen Ozma, may I go along? I’m fed up nursing this never-ending stream of chicks. The current batch are old enough to fend for themselves. And it’s ages since I got to take part in an adventure—after my starring role the time I saved you from a career as a jade grasshopper,” she bragged shamelessly.

“What makes you think we’re going to have an adventure?” questioned the girl ruler indulgently. “This is just a brief business trip.”

“Never mind. Something fun *could* happen. And just the trip would be a change.”

“Come along,” relented Ozma, and the hen flew up and nestled in the soft interstice between the Scarecrow on the Sawhorse’s rump and Ozma in the saddle. Then it was *hiyo!* and away. None but Wizard O.Z. Diggs and Tik-Tok the clockwork man saw off the equestrian party at the Emerald City’s north gate.

With the wogglebug flying lookout they clove to the Winkie-Gillikin border line from where it began just beyond the northwest corner of the Emerald City-state. No proper road went that way but the Sawhorse was adept at negotiating broken country, leaping fences, and clearing brooks with scarcely a break in his gallop. By midday they had reached Kite Island, bypassing Loonville, Marshland, and the Serpent Tree in the middle distance.

The Border River appropriately enough formed the border here and when they saw its left bank yellow and its right back purple they knew that they had not gone wrong so far. Where the river widened to enclose the little island the horse-borne party crept quietly round the Gillikin shore, admiring from a distance the varicolored kites that flew over the isle. They felt they didn't want to get held up—or even sent up—by a bunch of kiting enthusiasts and they took care not to let their presence be known.

Beyond Kite Island the travelers got into an area of moorland, the celebrated Bordermoor. Here anyone might go astray and our friends promptly did so. Though the river remained a guide there was nothing, color-wise, to mark the boundary. Everything was the hue of autumnal heather and bracken—even in June!: a sort of yellowish purplish brown. When the river began to trend actually northeast they knew it was time to cease using it as an indication of where a *western* boundary was to be found. They struck off northwest again.

For quite a few miles, indeed for about a quarter of the whole length of the Winkie-Gillikin frontier, all went well: straight northwestward they sped, with reassuring glimpses of Dwindlebury, the Laughing Willows, and the land of the Hoppers on the right, while Hotchinpotch, Tidy Town, and the wilderness trail to Wackajammy lay to the left. Say, they were doing swell until they fell for somebody else's line—or rather, *something* else's: something which had produced a perimeter that swept 'round the Gillikin forest and suddenly headed almost due north. It was a different river that formed the border here but when that too veered west the yellow aspect of all landly things still continued to fill the eye toward the north.

Now Ozma saw in earnest what that "something" (the wind) had done. Even as she watched, motes of dust, grains of sand, wafted past from the west and settled to earth, imperceptibly yellowing yet further the purple ground under foot. 'And this has been going on for centuries,' she thought, but said nothing to alarm her companions. 'If it keeps up, in time—quite a *long* time—there'll be nothing left of poor Gillikinland,' she mused, and gazed into

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the depths of the great purple forest nearby, whose nearer leaves were already sicklied over with a pale cast of buff. 'I wonder if the Gillikins realize. Surely they must. But how pleasant that they've never complained, at least in my hearing. Amusing that the protest should come from a *Winkie* miss!'

The party pressed on, intent now to discover, at once, the extent of the damage. The remaining quarter of the frontier-following journey was made in nearly due-northerly direction. Just at nightfall the Sawhorse clattered out across a still recognizably purple area of stony ground and came to a place that appeared, in the dim evening light, to be quite without color: neither violet nor yellow nor anything between, but instead a characterless grey. "The Impassable Desert," announced the Queen of Oz, awed in spite of herself. The night-murky sky northward brooded over a seemingly endless waste.

Professor Wogglebug circled down for a landing. "Yes, your highness," he confirmed, "it's a desert as far as the eye can reach. The Oz border runs quite distinctly as a virtually straight line east and west. The purple stands out sharply against the sort of grubby pearl color of the waste. But I don't understand this yellow section..."

Here the savant twiddled with his compass and sextant, which had done the journey inside an oiled-silk bag depending from the insect's next. "As near as I can calculate, without recourse to tables and slide-rules," he apologized, "about one sixth of the whole northern rim of Oz—and a generous sixth at that—appertains to the *Winkie* country! A serious oversight in my former drafting of the map of Oz! There must be an immediate new edition," and the professor made copious notes on his cuff.

"You mean, then," said the Scarecrow, "that the other five-sixths—"

"Say that again!?" broke in the professor, rather oddly, raising his eyes to stare at the straw/hay man with a twinkle. "That last word...?"

"Sixths...?" complied the Scarecrow.

"Very well done!" crowed the wogglebug. "And without a

tongue, to boot. Did you know that 'sixths' is the most difficult word to pronounce in the whole Ozish language? 'Kuh, suh, thuh, suh' — all in a row, with no vowels between. Even elocutionists have failed. Stout fella!" he praised the pleased Scarecrow again. "But you were saying...?"

"Oh, it wasn't a deep or well thought-out remark," demurred the other. "Just that five-sixths are all that's left of the Gillikin territory, you say? It must be the smallest, then, of the four big lands of Oz?"

"Who knows?" said Wogglebug, chagrined. "With my unwarrantedly assumed boundary delineation shown up now for the hollow mockery it was, who knows what size the various lands really are? For one thing, we can suppose that in the south the same thing as here is going on at the Quadling frontier: whole tracts of Winkie land being lifted up to blow east and en-orange the Quadlings' southwest border marches. 'Tis very grievous to be thought upon."

"I see that strong measures must be taken," replied Ozma in similarly Shakespearean vein, "and that at no distant date, to halt what seems to be a serious disequilibrizing of Oz geography. I wonder how long this has been going on..."

"Forever?" posited the professor. "I mean: winds have always been from the west, and Winkieland soil always dry, I suppose, and easily to be borne aloft by the wind. But shall we press on? to assess the extent of the disturbance."

"Hardly tonight, I think, Professor," said the queen, with a smile in her voice. "It's nearly full dark. See, Billina has tacitly given us the lead." Indeed, the yellow hen, on the Scarecrow's lap, had tucked her head under one wing and was breathing peacefully in sound sleep.

"What to do?" said the wogglebug, suddenly brought from his cartographical considerations and now apologetic. "Your majesty must have shelter!"

"We must have shelter," corrected the considerate queen. "We, plural, that is."

And then they all met at Penn Station—or, in this case, at Centralstationen in Stockholm. Petalutha actually WENT to the Pennsylvania Station, New York—but then, she was always confusing things and missed out on a lot that way. This time she missed out on the whole Swedish adventure and its aftermath and only caught up when all was over.

Ereol was standing in the middle of the arrival-hall diligently applying her nail-brush when some of the others showed up. “Look,” she said, pointing with her brush. “That’s clevvver, isn’t it?”

Moth, Butterfly, Kelebek, and Mariposa followed her indication. They read a long banner sign that said “BANANBANAN”, with underneath some words inviting travelers to go by that line rather than another.

“I don’t get it,” said Kelebek, who was always a little slow. All the fairies had of course provided themselves with Swedish for use during their outing so Kelebek knew what the word meant; she just didn’t think there was anything very “clever” about it.

“It’s a play on worrds,” explained Ereol patiently, “—or on word constituents, one might better say. You see the element

'banan' occurring twice in that word—"

"'Banana-banana'," translated Kelebek obtusely. "Why is that clever?"

"Oh, but 'banan', by Swedish morphology, also means 'the track' or, in this case, 'the railway line'," clarified Ereol. "Stress here on the firrrst syllable, of course. So the word as a whole means 'the banana line.' I don't think Ozzish allows of any such combination. It's quite clevvver."

"The Banana Line," mused Mariposa. "That's the one that goes toward Central America, I suppose. Might be fun to take it."

"Alas," said Ereol. "We're to go rrright in the opposite direction: norrrth."

"What line do we want?" said Moth, gazing around. She spotted placards promoting the charms of other trains. "'Bon-banan.' That's the one for you, dear," and she gestured impudently to Ereol. "'The polish line'."

"Or 'Bön-banan'," said Mariposa. "How odd: 'the prayer line.' Doesn't sound very safe, does it?"

"Dat's de one fo fokes goin' on pil'mages," guessed Butterfly.

"What about 'Ben-banan'?" said Kelebek, catching on and getting into the game. "'The Bone line'—" and, stretching her imagination, added: "Maybe that one runs out to a local cemetery," and she was rewarded by a round of approving laughter from her sisters.

"Well, don't forget 'ben' also means 'leg'," put in Moth; "'the leg line.' That would be for people who'd really rather walk," and all the fairies laughed even louder. Passers-by looked at them sternly.

But not all the local train routes made play with echoes of the word "bana." Mariposa spotted "Lur-banan." "'The Lur-line'," she part-translated haltingly. "What does 'lur' mean?"

"'Horn' or 'trumpet'," supplied Ereol, who had done her homework especially thoroughly. "But in fact it's mostly used in reference to the ancient Viking battle horns—"

"It could mean 'the Swindle Line'," interrupted Moth in her saucy way. "As a verb that word means 'cheat' or 'swindle'."

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And amid the general merriment Butterfly said, "Less doan us take DAT line, whutebbuh we does!" The crowd roared.

Passers-by began to stop and stare, with hands on hips, disgustedly. Shocking! Young women laughing in a public place! and a large railway station at that. They must be drunk. And women drunk in a public place could only be one thing.

Ereol caught a glimpse of an elderly person hastening away to pluck a strolling policeman by the sleeve. "Er—let's move onnn, girls," she urged. "We must be blocking the way."

Thank goodness: Lulea and her larger entourage were gathered out in the departures hall near track F. "Oh, there you are, dears! We wondered where you'd got to."

The Queen counted. "Twenty-five, twenty-six..." Then she re-counted but still didn't get further than twenty-seven. "Oh, dear, three of us missing. Whatever can have happened?" Each of the fairies had been meant to get to Stockholm station under her own steam, there to rejoin the band for the train journey north. This latter exercise was intended to accustom the ladies at least a little to the Swedish scene and manners before their taking part in this gala at the far-northern port town.

"We'll just have to go without them," sighed the fairy queen. "And reservations and all... We must simply hope they'll catch us up at Luleå."

Even so the fairy band filled nearly half the compartments of a coach. For the first half hour they gazed fascinated out the windows.

After that they gazed with less fascination. Finally some of them hardly gazed at all. Moth expressed the general opinion. "It's just like at home, isn't it? All forest. Only not so interesting as Burzee. There we've got plenty of deciduous trees but this seems to be *all* spruce—"

"Yes, I think we must have got on *gran-banan*," Ereol made a linguistic joke—then remembered to remind Kelebek that 'spruce' was 'gran' in Swedish. "—though of course there's plenty of fir and pine as well."

"I pine to see some fur," Moth punned further. "I thought the

Swedish woods were supposed to be full of animals. I haven't seen one."

"I can't bear it either," added Dib, getting almost too subtle, but Dreamsweet caught it and said: "Oh, deer!" and brought down the house. She followed it up by announcing, "I did see some golf lynx back a ways but they weren't in the forest." At this the others grew quite hysterical.

It was too much for the gentleman who, after tipping his hat and asking whether Petalutha's reserved place was taken, had occupied the sixth seat in the compartment. The fairy girls' laughter, and the causes of it, had issued from by no means bridled throats. Now the man could be seen making strange gestures with his shoulders behind his newspaper. At last he lowered the *Skellefteå Stiftstidende*, adjust his pince-nez, stood, reached into his breast pocket for his case, and presented his card. "I beseech your pardon for intruding, my dear young ladies, and beg to be permitted to introduce myself." Here the card was passed around. "I could not help but overhear — and ask to be allowed to join in the laughter."

The Flathead reached for his can of brains, jabbed in the point of the can-opener, and began to crank round, annoyance in his every gesture. Damn!, he'd been wanting to keep his vintage brains safe until the end, but this situation called for thought, tact, memory, social graces: all things which, unlike talking, you couldn't manage without the use of your intellect.

Angrily he raised the tin and dumped its contents out onto the level surface of his skull without even looking in the mirror. Some of the lumpy grey matter ran over the edge and a thin trickle of liquid leaked down beside his ear. He stuck a forefinger in the can and ran it around, then scraped off on the rim of his skull whatever adhered to it.

"Well?" he said disgruntledly, tossing the can in a corner.

Those of his onlookers who could gagged. Then Ozma said, "You are the chief Flathead, I understand?"

"What about it?"

It was hard for the Princess to maintain her usual gracious dignity in the face of such churlishness but she tried. "My part and I—" she gracefully indicated her four companions of various races "—have been benighted. We wish to request lodging of you

for the night. Any simple arrangement—”

“Heck, no!” blurted the chief Flathead—but then paused, as the brains exposed on his head-top began to firm up and function. “...your majesty...?” he went on haltingly. He’d spotted the traveling coronet on Ozma’s head and even without brains knew this was a situation somewhat out of the ordinary. *With* brains, he began to realize he was putting his foot in it rather badly.

“Oh,” said the Queen in momentary startlement. “You decline then?”

“I didn’t say that. I just said *no*.” The fellow’s brains were not yet *fully* functional. “—Er, Your Majesty... You ARE a majesty?”

“I am Ozma, Queen of Oz,” said the girl, drawing herself up, “and your Sovereign.”

Instantly the Flathead groveled offensively.

Ozma spurned him lightly with her foot. “Get up,” she commanded. “We do not permit such displays.” She waited. “Well...?”

“Of course, Your Majesty! Yes, indeed, Your Highness. Certainly, Your Divinity—”

The princess interrupted him. “Nor do we allow such terms of address. ‘Your grace’ will do. Say, have we your permission to lie here somewhere until morning?”

At once there was a great snapping of fingers and peremptory gestures as the now embrained Flathead gave orders to others of his race. People rushed about, bumped into each other, dropped things, and all talked incoherently to themselves and each other, but, amid the melee, arrangements did get made and ultimately some sort of order was restored. The chief Flathead was giving up his own dwelling, already the best furnished of the poorly appointed residences of the community, for the use of the fairy ruler.

Umbrella stands, ironing boards, china cupboards, cedar chests, footstools, and whatnots were carried out and day-beds, linen, wash-stands, ewers, and chamber pots were brought in. Soon an almost charming bower for the queen of Oz was established, with, in the same room, a roost pole for the chicken. In the male dormitory was a comfortably appointed shelf for Professor

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Wogglebug and a corner for the Scarecrow to stand in. The Sawhorse was catered for in a shed behind the building.

In the central apartment a festive board was spread with things that both queens, chickens and wogglebugs could eat, and there, after freshening up, our party regathered. The chief Flathead acted as waiter, nor did the fairy princess hinder him in this. A meal of principally greens and cereals was partaken of.

"Tell us," said Ozma, declining the bowl of parched corn that was offered her again and indicating that the waiter-chief should draw up a chair, "something of your history. Have you always lived on the mountain?"

"As far as our traditions show, your grace," said the Flathead, whose brains were now operating capably, with the result that his behavior was now neither gross nor groveling. It is really only brainlessness that causes people to act in either of those ways. A protective membrane was even beginning to form over the damp pile of brains on his head and the unsightly dripping had stopped. However, he wore a modified top hat to cover the sight. It might not be the done thing to sit down covered in the presence of royalty but on balance Ozma thought she preferred that to what otherwise would be on show.

"How far back do your traditions go?" asked the interested princess. "I mean, have you always been like that?" She raised her glance delicately to the top hat.

"Brainless you mean? Oh, yes, that's traditional. It is our belief that we were created thus in the dawn of history. It would have been the creator Goorikop, no doubt—in his legendary whimsical mood—who thought it would be amusing to see how people with no brains at all would behave." The chief sighed.

"But you have brains," pointed out Ozma, puzzled, "though in a somewhat unusual form. Did Goorikop provide—"

"Oh, he wasn't entirely heartless," interrupted the Flathead. "He realized that we would sooner or later die out as a race if we didn't at least have ACCESS to brains when we required them. For the routine of daily life of course nobody needed them but occasionally there would arise situations where somebody had to

add up numbers, or solve some social problem, or make plans for a civic occasion, and for such tasks of course brains were invaluable. However, as long as we remained brainless we couldn't even think about our situation, let alone take any steps to ameliorate it.

"Things went on like that for centuries, as we ran around clothed in our own hair and subsisting on roots and grubs. Goorikop, who stopped off once in a while to observe the antics of the brainless, began to find us boring in our unvarying mindlessness, so one time he brought in a wheelbarrow-load of brains and dumped them in a corner of the big cave in the mountainside we then occupied.

"The next time he visited he was surprised to find us unchanged in our brainless behavior. But the pile of brains was gone. We had eaten them. Goorikop retched when he heard of it and accused us of cannibalism. But how were we to know? We had not the intelligence to recognize the brains for what they were.

"This time he supplied us with individual portions of brain nicely done up in sealed fruit jars— and with instructions for their use."

"Yes, I wondered about that," interjected the fairy princess. "Canning was only invented less than fifty years ago—by a Frenchman, in time for the Paris Exposition. But how did you come to change from the use of Mason jars?"

"Oh, it took a very long time. Meanwhile old Goorikop had faded away and the next thing we knew a powerful fairy queen discovered us. I think she was somehow family with Goorikop but I can't be sure. In any case, she was in charge now and determining what would happen in Oz. She had an even greater sense of humor than the original founder and thought our situation amusing in the extreme." Again a sigh of a sufferer.

"Lurline—that was her name—spent a week here. She insisted we move out of the dark unsanitary caves in the mountain and live on the latter's appropriately flat top—in houses she quickly ran up for us by magic means. In the middle of the settlement she established a brain cannery. It employs all our workers, though they are by no means overworked. There's still not much call for

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brains in our daily life. Of course I'll have to order in a fresh can now. Brains once exposed to the air don't last very long: a few days and then they begin to smell, rather."

Ozma was glad she had finished her dinner before this discussion of the varying vicissitudes of loose brains began. Now she thanked the Flathead courteously for his orientation and made ready for the night.

The interlude in Flatheadland was entertaining but had of course little to do with the problem of the Winkie marches that were proceeding at a rate quite unprecedented in geographical history.

c h a p t e r

s e v e n

The gentleman in the corner seat, unobserved by any of his countrymen, allowed himself to be captivated by the charm of the five fairy girls whose artless prattle was so amusing. Of course they were strangers but then he HAD presented his card to perhaps that was all right, but they were also foreigners and that was graver. Although the ladies were fluent in Swedish you could tell by their appearance they were not natives. No self-respecting (that is, local) woman would allow herself to be seen in public in garments other than black, grey, dark brown, or—for the very daring—lilac. To ride in a train in a red dress! Unheard of! But the gentleman prided himself on his unusual broad-mindedness and thought, 'Poor things. They're foreign and can't help it. I must overlook it.'

So they all talked on as the miles clicked by. The fairies thought they had made their first friend in Sweden. Then just as the train was pulling into Luleå station they spoiled it all. Their fellow traveler had been *so* pleasant and *so* condescending that the irresponsible Moth said, "Can you recommend a hotel, sir? And won't you come and call on us there?"

Well, you can be sure the proper gentleman was at last prop-

erly shocked. To invite a perfect stranger home to one's lodgings! It was frightfully not done. The scales fell from his eyes and he saw these women at last for what they were.

He blushed violently, stammered something about "...the Temperance Hotel... Smith Street," and bolted from the compartment.

Moth stared, then burst into tears. I told you fairies could only be got at spiritually, and now Moth had. "Bu-but what could he mean by rushing off like that?" she cried.

The others tried to comfort her, or at any rate silence her, before they rejoined the ladies on the platform. This station seemed to be virtually the end of the line and what few passengers were left aboard besides the fairies scuttled away quickly after covert glances at the strangers hurriedly snatched.

The rest of the fairy band as well had been getting curious impressions of the Swedes but Queen Lulea for one was not going to let her first view of her (except for one small circle) namesake town be spoiled by an adverse judgment. She had out her guide book with town plan and read aloud for the others:

"The visitor arriving by rail at Luleå will at once be impressed by the presence of water on all sides. Although not technically an island the city has a view over water in the four directions. The station itself lies on the brink of Scrub Island Bay to the east—" The girls dutifully admired the view of crisp blue water lapping the barren rocks at the foot of the slope. "To the south is Grey Seal Bay, west is Lule Bay, and to the north of course North Bay. The orientation is east-west along the somewhat star-shaped cape that is the site of the present parish seat and county capital. But this was not always so. Originally Luleå lay fifteen kilometers to the northwest at what is now called Old Town and was only refounded in its present location in 1649—"

"How odd," put in Babbotschka. "I wonder why they moved."

Lulea consulted a footnote. "As international shipping required ever deeper draught the port facilities at the old town were no longer adequate. Luleå was dependent on its shipping, principally of iron ore from the interior—"

But the girls' attention was wandering. They wanted to stretch

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their wings—no, drat! they all remembered: they'd had to disguise their wings under their unusually full-backed dresses for this excursion. SOME adaptation to standards that would be acceptable out in the great world they had after all known enough to arrange for.

"Well, our legs then. We'll stretch those," said Gourd with a laugh and made for the exit.

Gloriana was more thoughtful and felt that it would be useful to be sure where one was going before going there. She curtsied before her queen and said, "We'll be staying at the Residence, of course? I wonder where the Reception Committee have got to..."

Lulea went pale. She'd known that the painful moment would have to occur but had put off thinking about it from hour to hour. Now she must make a confession about the limitations of her invitation. No mention of accommodations had been made! Nor any word written about being met, whether by Mayor or menials. Apparently the fairy queen (no mention either of any attendants of hers!) was expected simply to present herself at the governor's mansion when—and however—it suited her best.

"Oh, never mind, Your Feyness," comforted kind Moth, forgetting her own recent disappointment and now contriving even to reap a little gain from it. "Someone recommended the—er, Temperance Hotel. It's in Smith Street. Is that on your map?"

"Why, that's thoughtful, Moth," replied Lulea. "Thank you." Moth glowed. "Yes, here it is," and folding her street plan to the indicated area the queen fairy turned and led the way through the little station building to the street.

All the wonders of Luleå lay exposed before them: the sparse spring grass and the equally sparse windflowers in the tidy beds before the station. The row of tidy buildings in various hues of brick and stucco across the street. A tidy gilded church spire in the middle distance.

"It's tidy, isn't it?" said Queen Lulea.

No one found any further comment to make, except Titania, who said, "There's the Station Hotel," and indicated a prim building in the row opposite.

“Oh, I think we’ll treat ourselves and go to the grandest the town has to offer, don’t you, my dears?”

The fairies all drew nearer their leader and set up a whistling-in-the-dark piping: “Oh, yes! That will be lovely, your grace.” One or two shivered.

“Now it shows here,” went on Lulea, “that the City Hotel has two stars. Let’s make for that, shall we?” Again she led the way: to the corner of Main Street, and they turned to the west. This seemed to be quite the avenue of hotels and they passed several before coming to the City, a neat structure faced with stone, with enamel and carved decorations all around the monumental entrance.

Twenty-eight strong, keeping together, with glances modestly lowered, and trying to look like governesses and school teachers, the fairy band crossed the lobby. They’d learned a lot just walking through the town and wished by now fervently that their orange, purple, and emerald green dresses were other colors. Oh, if only they’d had the foresight to bring dark cloaks with them! Then they might at least have concealed from general view the flowing draperies they had at first been so keen to show off.

Feebimble as social secretary, and thereby ‘interference runner’ for the queen, approached the reception desk as the others hung back discreetly. She put on her most authoritative air. “Madame requires accommodation for herself and her twenty-seven novices,” pronounced the fairy with a flash of inspiration. “Of Saint Birgitte Convent, you understand...”

But God was not mocked. Canary yellow, silver, and fire-engine red gave the immortals the lie. The reception clerk, in cut-away coat and high collar, looked up, looked around, gasped, and looked down. “I regret; we’re fully booked.”

THIS was a situation the fairies had not envisioned. What was to be done? The clerk’s statement must be taken at face value. Of course this WAS the town’s grandest hotel (for lack of an actual Grand Hotel) and most travelers of a certain class would make for it. Though still so light of doors in this northern clime it was late evening, and the fairy band had been the last to leave the arriving evening train.

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Out they trooped and went to the Park Hotel next door. Here twenty-six fairies waited outside while Lulea and Feebimble—but in red and gold!—alone approached the counter. The former put on her most queenly and withal bewitching manner and implied, without actually stating a lie, that she was Nellie Melba.

The clerk was not mocked. If anyone as celebrated as the opera diva were in this remote back-country town he would have heard of it. What he did not doubt was that these women were “on the stage”—if not the street—and as such could have no place in the Park Hotel.

Lulea left the hotel in a fury. “What a shocking thing! I’ve never been so insulted in my life! Of course! there was room, at least for some of us...” The fairy looked round her crowd of loyal followers in, for the first time, serious dismay. “—and the rest could have been lodged elsewhere,” she finished falteringly.

“Never mind, Your Highness, we’ll try another place,” consoled Dreamsweet. “They can’t all be full,” she pursued, keeping up the fiction for a little while yet.

But at the Cecil and the Baltic their luck was no better. The manager of the latter actually suggested that the queen and as many of the other fairies as he caught sight of were no better than they should be. Certainly there was no accommodation for them at the Baltic. “Try the Diana, down by the ore docks,” he called after them tauntingly. So they knew that was one hotel they need *not* bother trying.

“What was the name of that place you mentioned?” Lulea, holding in her anger, asked Moth. “The Temptation?”

“The Temperance Hotel,” Moth hastened, chastened, to supply. “Oh, I do hope... It’s in Smithy Street,” she reminded, getting back to practicalities. “That’s the last street we crossed.”

The group retraced their steps to the Temperance but unfortunately received the same reply, though the manageress, a woman herself, realized the ladies were all they gave themselves out to be: honest virgins and blameless travelers. The Temperance really was full on this Saturday night.

“There’s the Station Hotel,” she said. “Have you tried there?”

“Titania,” said Lulea, brightening, as she always did when anyone was the least bit kind; “your hotel!” and to the hoteliere, “No, we haven’t. Yes, we’ll go there.”

“Wait, I’ll telephone through and see if they can suit you,” said the woman, unsmiling—well, I mean she wasn’t going to go *all* the way—but well-intentioned.

“Oh, would you?” asked the queen and simpered gratefully.

The hotel woman did her job well: got a commitment by the clerk at the Station Hotel that they could cater for twenty-eight lady travelers—*with* a bit of squeezing—and the party were duly expected. Was there very much luggage? Should a porter with barrow be sent?

The manageress looked again and her heart sank slightly. “No, there isn’t a great deal. That will be all right.” In fact, there was NO luggage, apart from a fairly capacious satchel of Lulea’s that Ozzod carried. That did seem to the woman a little suspicious, after all.

Queen Lulea and her train thanked her most cordially, though traying, as became a Queen and her court, not to overdo, and the padrona stayed behind at her desk, trying in her turn not to believe she had betrayed her profession by recommending clients so very much outside the ordinary as these.

Alas, the most expectant-looking face of the receptionist at the Station Hotel darkened the moment he saw the burgundy dress in which the fairy queen was arrayed and the smile on the face of the young lady called Titania and the sprightliness with which Mab, Wob, and Dib ran up to the check-in counter. This exchange followed:

“Yes?” [severely]

“The lady at the Temperence Hotel telephoned. We have reservations.”

“Indeed? I see no record here. Your name?”

“Fay McQueen.” [thinking rapidly]

“Sorry. No record.”

“Oh, but we made sure! You have room (with squeezing) for twenty-eight ladies!”

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“We have, alas, no such thing. I’m very sorry.” [lying]

“Oh, how terribly disappointing. But we can pay! Look!” [opening of valise, which appeared to be full of gold pieces: fairy gold, but the clerk wasn’t to know that]

“That isn’t the point. We have no wish to accommodate you. This is a respectable hotel.”

At that Lulea hit the ceiling. I keep telling you fairies can only be got at through their feelings.

If she hadn’t been inherently such a decent person (not, admittedly, a human being, but surely after all a “person”), Lulea might have changed the clerk into a lump of odiferous ambergris on the spot. As it was, she turned, white-faced, and marked straight out of the hotel, her court following crestfallen after.

The night chill cooled the fuming fairy as she hurried across the street and back to the railway station. Unfortunately the last train for the night had gone. All approaches to the interior of the building and to the tracks were locked and barred.

Feebimble took charge. Several of the other fairies crowded close about their queen to offer warmth and sympathy but Feebimbled called the turns. “See,” she whispered to Ereol, “the benches,” and pointed to the dark green seats that alternated with the scrawny flower beds in the gazon that stretched the length of the front of the station complex.

“But they’re taaaken!” urged Ereol in reply. Alas, too true: men of various ages but the same appearance: collars unbuttoned, hats askew, and eyes bleary (when visible) occupied places on four of the seven benches.

“Never *mind!*” hissed Feebimble. “They couldn’t be any worse than what we’ve run up against already,” and she began to bustle the girls of the fairy band toward the seats.

Now the fairies, in essaying to visit the realm of mortals, had taken on the usual size of humans. But this could be changed, for a need, and now Feebimble got the distraught Lulea to authorize the girls’ shrinking a tad so that seven of them could sit abreast on a bench. That filled the empty three benches and the remainder of the fairies placed themselves diplomatically on the other

seats, choosing ones whose drunken occupants had passed out, thus offering minimal risk to the young ladies of the band of immortals as they prepared to sit out the short-long light night on park benches.

c h a p t e r

e i g h t

Bright—well, not *so* bright: the sky was full of a yellow haze—and early the next morning Ozma rebridled and resaddled the Sawhorse and led him out of his stall. “Ready for another heavy run, Lignum?” she asked caringly. “We still have far to go before we can even think of turning home.”

The Sawhorse said nothing but blew out his lips and shook himself spiritedly and his mistress knew that he was willing. The others took their places and Ozma turned to look graciously at the little group of Flatheads who stood about in the yard to watch the party off.

It was hard to love people who were so declaratively brainless. The Flatheads’ stupidity shone out of their dull eyes and was communicated by their open-hanging mouths. But they were as God—or rather Goorikop—had made them and Queen Ozma had not yet reached a stage in her spiritual development wherein she allowed herself to go around altering the manifold variety and colorfulness which, when she ascended the throne, she had found characteristic of her country.

Away galloped the Sawhorse, and the wogglebug flew overhead. The road led down corkscrew-fashion about the sides of

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Flathead Mountain (which was not all that high) and very soon the travelers were at the frontier, if so one may call a place without fences or guardhouses or gates or troops on patrol. It was simply that round about a certain point the color yellow took over completely and no more trace of purple, violet, mauve, lavender, heliotrope, or lilac was to be seen on the surface of the ground (no matter what conditions might exist some yards below). But the trees and bushes! the concerned reader will say: THEY'D go on being purple if they were Gillikin. Well, no, as the silent centuries crept on and yellow dust overlay everything, purple plants dried out and yellow ones took over.

"This is not right," stated Ozma as the Sawhorse raced on. "The north of Oz is known from time immemorial to be purple and at this moment we are far nearer the northern edge of Oz than the western. This ground should not be all yellow! Something must be done to bring it back to what it undoubtedly was of old."

"If seven maids with seven mops swept it for half a year, do you suppose," the Scarecrow said, "that they could get it clear?"

"I doubt it," said the Queen of Oz and shed a bitter tear. It was distressing to find for the very first time in her reign that there was something demonstrably wrong, unjust—or anyway unlike what it was credited with being—about her kingdom.

On they rode, now following the left bank of the Yellow River. This took its name not from any Chinese namesake but simply because of the fact that it was choked with yellow silt. On the dry upland steppe, so near the Impassable Desert a few miles to the north, the stream spread out thin and languid, like the Rio Grande of west Texas: "too thick to drink, too thin to plow." The Sawhorse was kept busy leaping little wandering meanders of the river, while the sky grew yellower and yellower.

Traversing the south bank the travelers missed passing through Corabia, Samandra, and Corumbia, thus leaving those enchanted lands to be officially discovered a dozen years later. But they did pass through Quick City—fast. Not there was the address of Miss Lana Peethisaw.

No, Lana lived the life of a little lady in a cunning cottage on the outskirts of Cut-out County. There it was always afternoon. Everyone had just had a bath and was fresh and neat; nobody was ever hot and feddy in Cut-out County. Nothing was ever an effort there. Everything came ready cut out, which is not to say cut and dried. Nothing ever changed and everything was always very nice. Maybe not exciting but just as you would always, in memory, prefer to have it.

Lana lived at number ten, Lullaby Lane. ‘Hm,’ thought Ozma. ‘At five she won’t be too old for lullabies.’ An odd little wave of tenderness washed over the fair.

There was a hitching post out front, knee deep in dusty yellow grass, and there they hitched the Sawhorse. Just in case he felt like having a well-earned rest there was a pile of springy hay beside the post for him to lie down on. In Lignum’s case, of course, this was all superfluous. He could never tire.

Before the Oz princess and her party knocked they had a look, by the dark yellow light of day, at the outside of the little girl’s house. The building was drawn with thick bold smooth lines: the yellow plastered walls, the red shutters, the steep brown thatched roof, the blue door. It made you want to touch it and when you did you were surprised. The low-hanging charming roof was not compact of sturdy straw stalks but seemed to be all one piece. When Ozma, puzzled, learned nearer she saw the roof was made out of enormously thick pasteboard. ‘Of course!’ she realized, ‘cut-outs!’

The realistic-looking silver-colored door-knocker thumped cardboardly against the beaver-board door, which flew open to reveal a dark-haired little miss dressed à la Kate Greenaway. “Good day,” said the girl. “Come in. I was expecting you.”

The callers were taken aback. How could—!? They had got there quicker than any letter could have arrived—which was why Ozma had never sent one.

The princess smiled a little bewilderedly. “Miss Peethisaw? You were expecting us?”

“Yiss. Nothing is ever a surprise in Cut-out County—except

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planned surprises, like birthday parties. It would throw us off if anything unexpected happened. So we expect everything."

Ozma decided that that was not unreasonable. Still she was puzzled. "I am Ozma, as you no doubt expected. But *I* expected a much younger young lady. That is to say—" Ozma waffled, unusually for her. "I knew you were five years old—from your letter—but your speech is different from your style of writing..."

"Oh, that," said Miss Peethisaw, welcoming in her guests with a graceful gesture. She bent to clasp Billina caressingly on the back. The hen clucked in appreciation. "I never write like I talk. I use all different styles in writing. It's my hobby, in fact. As for my letter to your majesty, it says in my *Manual of Correct Letter-Writing* that that's how children talk. Of course the book was printed in 1867, so it may be out of date. It also says that on no account must children WRITE like that. I'm afraid I was being rather naughty."

"Indeed, admitted Ozma, "a little of that might have gone a long way. I like you better as you really are." Then, "I think, in fact, I might say that of most persons.

"But now," the princess went on, when all had been seated around a table and Miss Lana was handing round the syrupy-sweet malted milk and the doughnuts, "your problem has caught my attention. During our journey here I found indeed that what you posited was correct: the Winkie Country does look to be way out of line. I had no idea—and can't account for it. Can you?"

"No; that's why I wrote you," said the matter-of-fact Miss Peethisaw. "I didn't know until I saw the new map of Oz that this part ought, by rights, it seems, to be purple. Here people believe it's always been Winkie—and yellow. But either that's wrong, or your map is. Something's got to give."

'This is a very grown-up five-year-old,' thought the princess, without, however, liking little Lana the less. Aloud she said, "Oh the map is obviously wrong. *That* must go. But a larger issue is this: does it matter if a whole sixth of the north of Oz is not, as it has always been reputed to be, Gillikin at all but Winkie? We might just rewrite the textbooks and let it go at that."

"Perhaps that's a good idea, your highness," agreed Miss Lana

sagaciously. "It might after all be troublesome to have to move whole countries. There are any number of them, you know, east of here and all yellow and fondly believing themselves to be Winkie. How would they take to being done over purple?"

"That indeed is a point that ought to be considered," quoted Ozma with a swallowed laugh at the drollness of this learned conference with a little girl. But Miss Peethisaw was special. What WAS it about her?

However, "Another point," the queen went on, "and to my mind the gravest of all, is that Winkie-land, not content with being already the largest of the constituent lands of Oz, is still growing! I hardly think that will do, do you? We don't want the purple Gillikin country to disappear completely."

"I suppose that *wouldn't* do," agreed Lana. "Would it? I, of course, as a Winkie, can't see that the Gillikins should mind. Yellow is such a wonderful color, isn't it!" she said with enthusiasm.

"Are you a Winkie?" asked Ozma speculatively. "You'll forgive me but you don't seem quite as yellow as the rest."

"Oh, no, I haven't been here long enough—" began the girl but broke off suddenly and seemed curiously a little flustered. "But I'm forgetting my manners! I'm afraid I do forget them, rather a lot. I see you looking about and of course I haven't showed you over the house yet!" She stood up from the tea-table abruptly.

Ozma *had* been casting sidelong glances at the furniture and hangings. Everything was distinguished by being edged with a thick border of black, no matter what its own dominant hue might be. How odd. Surely not an emblem of mourning? No, nobody ever mourned in Oz. It went against the genius of the country for there ever to be cause for grieving.

Suddenly, before Miss Peethisaw had yet said a word in explanation, it came to the girl ruler: of course! the things were cut-outs! The black lines were a guide for clipping out, and now Ozma could see where shears had gone round every piece of the furnishings: occasionally not too evenly. She suspected that children had had a hand in the scissor work. Possibly Miss Peethisaw herself.

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"You live here all alone, do you?" asked Ozma as Lana showed the way into the kitchen. No cook or serving maid stood there.

"Yiss, all alone," and the girl gave voice to a trill of laughter—that cut off sharply.

"And your parents, my dear," said Ozma kindly. "Where are they?"

But Miss Peethisaw stumbled violently as she followed the others over the threshold onto the back porch, and somehow the princess' question went unanswered. Queen and Scarecrow and wogglebug all put out their hands (or feelers) to support their hostess. "How silly of me!" Lana cried. "But oh! look at the sky. It's never been that dark before—and it's only five o'clock..."

Until this the wogglebug and the Scarecrow and the hen had been content to listen, over the table, to the talk of the two female savants but now the Professor offered a third expert's view: "Yes, it's storming up there. As we came along I noticed wind resistance growing ever stronger. Strange how still it is on the ground—"

"That's because nothing ever varies here in Cut-out County," Miss Peethisaw put in, seeming relieved at the change of topic. "There's always just a faint breeze. It makes things more 'average' that way."

"I see," said the Scarecrow, who had been quietly sizing things up. "Averagity is all. No rocking the boat."

The young girl looked at him with respect. "That's it. We've all had our boats rocked enough when we came here. This is the quiet backwater we long for."

But by now Ozma had guessed enough not to ask further discomfiting questions.

The policeman drew his silver sword and rapped a shoe sole sharply.

Then he leant closer and realized that the sole was not that of a black wooden clog but appertained to a ruby slipper that graced the foot of a very pretty, if disheveled, little lady sleeper. He laughed embarrassedly and the noise wakened the slumberer.

"Sir!" cried Lulea, Queen of the Fairies, and was for a moment disoriented. "Who dares disturb the Queen's repose?" And then she remembered where she was.

Round about, bums and drunks were stumbling to their feet with mumbles and curses and wandering away. A hasty glance aside and Lulea saw her fairy retainers cowering back from other policemen and holding their draperies before their mouths.

"Please, ladies!" she hissed. "Conceal your ankles!" The fairy had caught on to outer-world prudishness with lightning intuition.

Now she turned back to her 'own' policeman and secretly admired his crisp blue uniform and gold epaulettes and silver belt and scabbard. "What can I do for you, my man?" she demanded, trying to keep up a front.

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The officer touched his cap brim. This was clearly no floozy requiring sending on her way with a flea in her ear. Lulea swung her feet to the ground and stood up to her full four feet. Why, it was a little girl! saw the constable. But he looked closer in the half light and realized from the fairy's features that she was a fully mature woman—and cute to boot! But he must never think of that, and he cleared his throat and said:

"Apologize, ma'am. The official proclamation states: No overnighting in public places, to wit, specifically, no sleeping on benches..."

"Where do you propose we go then?" said Lulea, seeing the position and building up some righteous dudgeon.

"To a hotel...?"

"Hah!" and no one could have plumbed the queen's bitterness. "Tell that to the marines!" she lapsed into deplorable jargon. "We've been turned away at every hostelry in this town!"

"Indeed?" The officer could hardly believe it of someone so, in her miniature way, impressive. Then he remembered where he was and believed it. "Please tell me the circumstances."

The fairy did, without any great show of satisfaction. The policeman clucked and cooed, then called his fellows around him and they consulted together. As policemen always annoyingly do, they acted as if they could by no means credit the story of the person they were interviewing. They requested Queen Lulea and her companions to follow and they all re-entered the Station Hotel across Priest Street.

Happily the fairy was not required to be present at the actual interview. She wouldn't have been pleased. It went like this:

"These travelers need rooms for the night."

"I've told them: nothing doing."

"Have you got unoccupied rooms?"

"Yes."

"The women have funds to pay fully for their expenses."

"So they indicated."

"Then why won't you accommodate them?"

"I don't like their looks."

"That's all? That's not sufficient grounds for refusing hospitality."

"It is here. We don't take in tarts."

"Watch your language! You've got no evidence they're prostitutes!"

"I don't need it. The hotel has no obligation to take in people we, for any reason, don't want."

And it hadn't. That was the law of the land. Perhaps it was the same in many lands, but in this land they invoked the law, not seldom. Merely dress too loud—or laugh too loud—and you'd had it.

Just to be sticklers the posse of police bicycled round to the four or five other hostelries and went through the same routine. With less or more surliness the result was similar in every case. Now the cops' looking for trouble had produced a neat little batch of it. The women mustn't sleep on the benches, they couldn't sleep in the hotels. Where then?

You guessed it. Lulea, Queen of the Fairies, and all her radiant band spent the rest of the night sacked out in cells at Luleå town jail. The police were obliged to turn away many drunks that night.

“Professor,” said Ozma, “will you...?” and the big bug took off to case the upper atmosphere again.

Because nothing ever changed in Cut-out County the far sky merely got darker and darker, while on the ground it remained still afternoon and no effects of storm or downpour were to be noted. But after all it was by now six o’clock and consequently evening. In other places the state of things might be quite different, so the princess sent the wogglebug up into the stratosphere to investigate.

He returned in half an hour very much the worse for wind. “Whew!” he expressed it, less than elegantly. “It’s a fierce dust storm up there! near hurricane force, I’d say. I can’t think what effects it must be having in other parts of the country that aren’t under an unchangeability spell as here.”

“Even here doesn’t seem to be totally unaffected,” remarked Ozma ruefully as she glanced at her green satin travel togs now overlaid with a smeared film of dust in just the few moments she was outside to welcome the Wogglebug back from his investigatory flight.

“No,” agreed the bug: “a gauge of how grave the situation is.

I would go so far as to characterize it as a National Emergency."

"Oh, gracious," said the concerned ruler; "then we mustn't linger here in dalliance, pleasant though it indeed is... My dear Miss Peethisaw," — she turned to her hostess — "it's been delightful! Thank you so much. But as you so rightfully warned us: the situation in this part of our land is untenable. We must away and try to cope... thought—" The princess paused, for once seeming to be perplexed. "I wonder... I haven't had to deal with actual disasters of nature before. I'm not sure to what extent mere magic—"

"Princess Ozma, may I not come with you?" Lana, to the girl ruler's surprise, entreated. "I can't help but feel it's my fault for having got you into this. Besides," — here a sigh escaped her — "I'll miss you when you've gone... And then of course you'll need me to show you the way," she clinched her case.

Ozma was touched and didn't know how to refuse. "But, dear," she objected, "there's no more room on the Sawhorse! I was silly not to use the Red Wagon, but I didn't foresee—"

"It's only half a mile to the county line," urged Miss Peethisaw. "We can all walk that far—and there you'll have a full view out into the dust storm or whatever it is."

Ozma resisted no longer. Lana ran around to draw the curtains, put out a note for the milkman, collect her pad and pencil, and throw on her little yellow riding hood, then the party left the house. They (nearly) all walked. The queen felt uncomfortable at riding while little girls of five went on foot. On the other hand, if she invited the Winkie girl to join her on the Sawhorse's back that would leave the Scarecrow afoot and they could lose valuable time waiting for him to totter the half mile to the border. As it was, Ozma requested her devoted henchman to board the horse and go on ahead. She, Lana, and Billina would trot after them at their best speed.

"It's just over Honey Hill and down Daffodil Dale," explained the little girl as she pattered along. "It isn't far. I just hope we don't get stuck."

"'Stuck'?" queried the queen.

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“Yiss, crossing Honey Hill. I always do. That’s why I’ve never seen Daffodil Dale—just heard about it. It was all I could do to unstick myself the couple of times I tried, and it took me all day to get the last of the honey off my shoes, my clothes, and myself.”

“Perhaps I can do something to help us on our way,” enheartened Ozma and to reassure herself felt of the slim quiver the hung, Diana’s-arrow-case-like, over her left shoulder and contained her fairy’s wand.

Yes, there reared the brown-blond height of honey, glistening even in the subdued half-light of the eternal afternoon. Bees were everywhere. Indeed, the hill would seem to have the character of a vast unenclosed honey-comb. Ozma guessed that the nectar gatherers had come to realize over the ages that they had nothing to fear from natural conditions or *change* of conditions. Their honey home could never be threatened by rain or snow, cold or heat, dirt or predations, so why not just build outdoors, with immediate easy access?

Anyway the bees did. The years, the centuries, went by and the honey hill got bigger and bigger. Like miles-deep glaciers with their ice the mass of wax and honey pressed ever tighter on the strata deeper down. No doubt down there it was solid sweet rock. The bees seemed not to mind the gradual loss of that fruit of their ancient ancestors’ labors and merely rejoiced at having an ever wider outer surface to add cells of sweetness to.

The road—well, it could hardly be called more than a path—led right up and over the hill. Despite the adhesiveness of the honeyscape on every side it appeared that sufficient foot passengers had gone that way to make a slight indentation in the crushed wax to indicate which way the route led.

The fairy had out her wand now, made a pass, and invoked an old spell that would turn things solid for a limited period. Warning Billina not to consume any of the industrious insects who for the nonce were their willynilly hosts, the princess led the way. Solid-state honey proved not to be more troublesome to tread upon than, for instance, worn-out flypaper—if even *that* sticky. It was well not to linger though. Who knew what might happen if body

weight and warmth were allowed to rest on one spot for any length of time?

Yet they did stop. They couldn't help it. Fairy queen and Winkie girl could not keep back twin cries of wonder when they reached the top of the hill and saw below them in the distance a crowd, a host, of golden daffodils. They gazed and gazed, until with a start Ozma realized she was ankle deep in clinging tar. Quickly she did a reinforcing charm that outright froze the honey briefly.

Ten thousand saw them at a glance, but the yellow flowers were not dancing. Rather, they stood in solemn array entirely filling a shallow valley, not moving until now and then a faint wind would shift over them and they all nodded their heads in one direction in a long slow wave-like sweep across the field. It was so quiet. Oddly, one had the feeling that so much flower beauty ought to be uttering some kind of flower music, but all was silent. Ozma, Lana, and Billina did not speak for awe.

But when their feet stuck again they knew it was time to go. Down off Honey Hill they came, then found a narrow path among the daffodils and followed that until the magic faded. At the ridge beyond Daffodil Dale the night could be seen and the storm raged without.

Ozma turned to Miss Peethisaw. "You must turn back here, my dear. I shall go on: Billina and I—" But even the princess looked pale in the glare of lightning striking through the yellow dark. "Go back to the unchanging comfort and security of Cut-out County..."

"No, my princess," said the little girl. "It's too late for me to go back now. At first, living here, I was glad just to be alive in a safe quiet place. But now I know it isn't enough. I have to go on, just as I always did want to go on: to grow up, to experience—oh, just everything..."

The wise ruler already knew enough about the mystery of things not to fight with that. "Will you keep very close to me then? Take my hand? Or no, hold onto my cincture, while I carry Billina. We don't know how this wind is going to be. I don't see our friends anywhere. I'm rather afraid..."

‘That’s funny,’ thought the officer on the desk. ‘They look like they’ve grown!’ Pretending he had an early mosquito in it, he rubbed his eye, in fact both of them. No, it was true enough. This Mrs. McQueen—English? Australian?—was definitely a foot taller than she had been when he personally had locked her in her cell several hours earlier.

Not only that but she was dressed in severe black bombazine. But there hadn’t been room enough in that one satchel for any change of costume and certainly not changes for twenty-eight (by actual count) young women. Yet there they all came trooping in shades of black, grey, and navy. Vanished were the dubonnet taffeta, the green organdie, the watermelon georgette. Hair styles were different too: formerly flowing or floating locks were drawn back severely, parted in the middle, and concealed under uniform dark caps. The girls were even wearing hooked noses. This was Madame Reinedesfees and her corps des ballet in street dress.

Madame was inclined to be severe herself, though still quite graciously condescending to the sergeant who had been so hospitable as to save her from complete homelessness during the night. She signed the check-out book but did not hang around in

superfluous conversation.

Fairies don't need to breakfast. Just as well, because you can be very sure that no establishment throughout the length and breadth of Sweden was open for public refreshment-serving at nine o'clock of a Sunday morning in 1908. So the ballet corps just walked demurely down the street, two abreast, with eyes maidenly lowered. The girls certainly didn't raise them to look back to the southeast at the town's one landmark, the new belated-mixed-Gothic Cathedral. Not though the fairies knew, someone had blundered and instead of looking distinctive and attractive the landmark just resembled any other run-of-the-mill red brick Victorian church.

Luleå was not actually ugly, just dull. Since the disastrous fire of 1887 all the colorful old wooden buildings were being replaced by brick and concrete. Yet just ahead the walkers saw a forest! and at that fairy hearts picked up. Past one remaining charming old house in yellow plankwork with green trim and after that they were in a wood—well, a thickly tree-grown park that preserved comforting resemblances to the wild. They felt almost at home.

In the City Park there was a little museum and they lingered round it under that benign sky, watched the moths fluttering among the heath and harebelle, and listened to the soft wind breathing through the grass. To tell the truth, the fairies were by now dreading the interview that was due imminently to take place between their Queen and the local governor, mayor, and/or corporation in the big house at the end of the street.

The Governor's Mansion was a quaint building, old-fashioned already now, forty years after its construction. It was designed in the traditional country architecture of Sweden: vertical planks with thin wooden string courses sealing the intervening interstices. Traditionally too it was painted dark red, with wide window mouldings in white. Over the simple double wooden doors were the arms of Norrbotten under a carved architrave. Wide granite steps led up from grass and gravel. Queen Lulea trod the gravel with sinking heart.

An eighteenth-century footman opened when Ereol pulled the

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bell. His appearance made all the fairies pause a moment, speechless, but Lulea was not to be overawed by a flunkey. "Will you announce to His Excellency, my man, that Lulea, Queen of the—well, Queen Lulea—has arrived in response to his invitation." Here the fairy drew herself up regally to her full height—and, forgetting herself, shot up to six feet. If he hadn't been Swedish the footman's eyes would have boggled. He did in fact *almost* stumble as he hastened to his task.

There was a considerable period of waiting in the spacious forehall, just to emphasize that the governor was the governor. Then attractive white double doors opened and a man in a morning coat came through. Protocol was followed fully. With a faint, solemn—oh, one would hesitate to say "sickly"—smile the Governor bowed. The Queen inclined her head. Neither knew which, by rights, should kiss the other's hand, so neither did, but they moved into proximity to each other and hands were agitated slightly, indicating that in a later age they might have shaken.

So far nobody had spoken. When somebody did, it was the Governor to the footman. "Tell the Governess that the—er, Queen has come." The man went.

'Why did he say "er"?' thought Lulea. 'I *am* a queen! —if not, in the present country, *the* queen.' It seemed to her that things were not boding well.

As if she had been pre-alerted to the likelihood of a call, the "Governess," who proved in fact to be the Governor's wife, appeared almost at once. She wore a severe high-chested lilac gown with white satin panels and petit-point slippers. "My dear," the governor spoke, "the—er, Queen has been so good as to call. I think: coffee." The lady gave the appropriate instructions.

There was an awkward pause of eight minutes. The governor and governess enquired how the "queen" and her attendants had enjoyed their journey. Lulea duly praised the uniformity of the fir forest they had traversed. She cast a discreet veil over the night they had spent in jail. No enquiry was made as to where the fairy band were staying nor was any invitation forthcoming to reside at the Mansion.

Now at last the coffee (in lieu of breakfast, for which by now it was rather late) was announced and they moved to an inner room where a long table, reminiscent, had anyone but known, of that in *Alice*, was set with an enormous amount of crockery though with little sign of what was to be consumed therefrom. As it happened, the coffee, exquisitely served, proved to be very good and the fairies, even if they *could* go indefinitely without eating, were glad of it. Plates of buttered slices of sweet bread were passed round.

Though pleased, the fairies were careful not to smile. In recognition of this compliance with custom the governor and wife unbent in their turn and *almost* smiled. Yet the difficult part lay ahead. After twenty minutes of protocol remarks the Governor began:

“In the time of King Karl the Eleventh commissions for the uncovering of witchcraft were active and widespread. The Devil was personally present in many regions. He was able to establish relations with particular individuals, usually women.” Here the speaker seemed to cast a sharp glance about the coffee table at his dark-clad solemn-visaged guests. “These were employed in the forwarding of his various schemes. Hundreds of women were accused, tortured, and executed for consorting with the Devil.

“This of course was a tragic misunderstanding. There is no such thing as witchcraft.” The governor expressed this thought as if it were a proven fact; Lulea of course could have undeceived him. “Nowadays we know better. Sweden is fully modern. No one now believes in witches.”

The governor paused. Now came the painful utterance: “—nor in fairies. It is *my* duty to inform you that such have been outlawed.”

Queen Lulea couldn’t speak for just a moment. Finally she was able to say, “But...”

The Governor, anticipating her protest, was ready. He said extenuatingly: “Brownies still exist—but they are only allowed out at Christmas. Then of course we have trolls. You can see THEM on the street any day. But as for fairies, elves, goblins, and all such truck, they simply don’t exist.”

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“But—” said Lulea again.

“We do not speak for other countries. What is permitted there is not our concern. However, in the cause of our own national purity and freedom from harmful superstition, we have urgently to request that a native Swedish name—or any close approximation thereto—not be employed by any foreign fairies. It could lead to serious misunderstanding, even to compromise of our national reputation—”

“But...”

“I am sorry but I can brook no rebuttal. I must request you, Madame Queen, hereafter and forevermore, to cease and desist from the use of the name Lulea—”

That was as far as he got—and as far as the fairy had ever been got at in her feelings. With a piercing cry, so shrill and high it could not even be discerned by the human ear, the fairy Lulea simply vanished—followed an instant later, as soon as they caught on, by all her loyal band.

Indeed, Princess Ozma had cause to be afraid, though in fact her recent hesitant broken-off remark had been intended only to convey that she sensed that her male companions had got into difficulties in the sand storm. They had. The Sawhorse, galloping on in advance with the Scarecrow clinging desperately, had crossed the county line and promptly been snatched up by the gale and flung, not into the next county merely, but into the next country, viz. that of the Gillikins. Somewhere up in cloud nineteen the two travelers parted company, practically forever. The Scarecrow ended up flattened against the side of Flathead Mountain and, as for the Sawhorse, I don't even know where *he* came down. H.M. Wogglebug rode out the storm high on the top of a thermal.

The ladies fared scarcely better, although, with an assist by Ozma's magic, they did manage at least to stay together. Sometimes during the hours they were blowing about every which way. Billina wished she had never asked to come along on the adventure. It was proving more replete with incident than she had bargained for. Lana Peethisaw on the other hand was almost enjoying it. She felt she was really living. And Ozma? 'If we ever make a landfall,' she thought, 'God works a miracle.' In her extremity

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she even mentioned that deity's name.

In the end, storm-tossed, sand-saturated, dust-blinded, filthy-haired and -feathered, the party did of course fall to earth. It was somewhere unspecified and unspecifiable on the edge of the Impassable Desert. Lana's yellow riding hood was torn in two and Ozma had lost her ear-poppies and looked quite naked. Worse was the loss of her wand, which had fallen none knew where, though the useless wand case which had held it, being strapped through her arm-pit, was saved. The fairy sat on a sand mound and regarded the quiver ruefully. At any rate it was by now early daylight and she *could* regard it.

"What do we do now?" said someone—Billina, I think, although she was rather preoccupied, preening for dear life.

"I'm too storm-tossed to know," confessed the girl ruler with chagrin.

"Should we send for help?" asked little Lana, who seemed to have greater faith in fairy Ozma's powers than did fairy Ozma herself at this moment.

"If only we could," wished Ozma, without, however, the wish coming true. Just in case anybody hadn't realized it, she spelled it out: "I've lost my wand."

"Oh," said Lana and looked solemn.

"I wouldn't be able to 'send'," continued the fairy, then looked a question. "—at least, anyone very big."

She glanced at Billina.

The hen noticed the pause. "Don't look at *me*," she warned, then did a double take. Ozma *was* looking at her. Quickly she retracted. "I mean: *are* you looking at me, ma'am?"

"I wonder," Ozma mused on. "With finger magic I could actually transfer goods up to a weight of eleven and a half pounds. I wonder..." she repeated and looked about her. Rapidly she muttered a spell and put some of her fingers and toes in certain prescribed positions. A shallow pit appeared in the silver-grey sand a couple of yards away. Ozma had conveyed eleven pounds of (extra) sand to the Gobi Desert.

"Oh!" cried Lana again. She was not quite sure what she her-

self weighed but she said, "Could I—" Then she broke off. She remembered.

"Oh, I'm so sorry, darling," sighed the fairy, and neither she nor the little girl referred to the idea again. "But Billina..."

She changed her tack. "But who—that is, *whom...*?" the princess went on. "Glinda the good sorceress could fetch us off this desert. The Wizard's magic isn't as yet quite up to that. But what is wanted is far beyond the scope of either stage magic or witchcraft. There's going to have to be intervention in the very forces of nature. Now who..."

Of course it didn't take the percipient Ozma very long to realize that the authority she had need of was the supremely powerful Lulea, queen of all the fairies: at least, of those on the continent of Sempernumquam: Lulea, her very own relation, arbitratress of all matters magical in this land and very influential as well in the councils of fairies everywhere. "Lulea ..." she breathed.

"Lulea?" said Lana.

"Mmm. Queen of the Fairies," clarified this other young fairy queen.

"Is that the same as Lurline?" said Billina, whose knowledge of Oz history and fairiography was there, but patchy. "The one that enchanted Oz?"

"A good question," conceded the fairy. "Actually, you know, there's some mystery in the case. Lurline's character and nature go—or went!—beyond all human comprehension. She can, or could, take on alternate appearances, alternate personalities, even, for a need, alternate histories. It's difficult to pin her down—not that one would attempt to, of course," the girl ruler hastened to add, mindful of the, in this case, unlucky resemblance between fairies and butterflies. "Too little has come down to us of actual chapter and verse in early Oz chronology. The powerful female spirit who chanced to fly, together with her attendant sprites, over Oz and enchant it long ago has not been definitely identified with that Lurline who flourished elsewhere as a water sprite or 'Water Queen.' It seems unlikely that they were one and yet the identity

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of names is suggestive. And whether the water goddess was or was not identical with one 'Lorelei' who was the legendary mermaid spirit of the river Rhein has not been surely established either.

"But for our purposes the later history of the enchantress of Oz is of more concern. She is definitely stated to have been forgetful!: an unexpected trait in a widely powerful immortal but yet possibly of use if one were not to be too burdened with an ages-old load of recollections or with a sense of *déjà vu*, and hence boredom, at everything on earth.

"Could she possibly have forgotten that she was a river sprite and settled down in the forest of Burzee? which is about as far as you can get from rivers without being in an actual desert. It seems hardly credible, and yet for ages now—well, I don't know how long, really—there's been no news of Lurline, while the lovely Queen Lulea has throned it in Burzee and made her presence known also far beyond the confines of that storied wood—"

"Yeah," said the yellow hen and again paraded her knowledge of *Sempernumquam* history. "I was talking to King Bud of Noland at your party a while back^s and he told me all about queen Lulea's enchantments in his affairs. It was through her he got to be king! and that was years ago already."

"Quite," agreed the fairy. "In any case, it is to Lulea we must make our appeal now. If anybody can put things to rights in this matter touching the welfare of Oz, it is she. That is: if there even *is* anyone to whom we can make an appeal..." went on Ozma, displaying a regrettable doubtfulness in the efficacy of, for example, prayer.

Billina was quick of comprehension. "You want me to go to Burzee, I take it? If that storm was just blowing *south* I could almost have ridden there on that!"

But Ozma's thought processes were even quicker. "Not so fast, my dear. It's Lulea herself I must fix on, not just her accustomed home place, for I happen to know that the dear queen was off

§ See *The Road to Oz*. Editor's note.

lately on a journey to the outside world. To Sweden, in fact—”
“Va’ roligt!!” squawked the chicken. “Tänk! att jag nu äntligen ska komma till gamla Sverige!” For the fact was that Billina had grown up on the farm of Swedish immigrants in America before her miraculous translation to Oz.[§] She only acquired Evish (which is the same as Ozish, which, curiously enough, closely resembles English) upon going ashore with Dorothy from the chicken coop in Ev some years previously.

However, Ozma, after having instructed the yellow hen in what to say to Queen Lulea, ensorcelled her away, not to Sweden exactly but to wherever the fairy queen actually was.

It was with considerable puzzlement that after a moment Billina found herself on the deck of a large black ship gliding up and down under a semitropical sky.

§ See *Ozma of Oz*. Editor’s note.

"In Sweden, your grace!" put in Moth alertly.

"Don't remind me!" hissed the queen and looked about her. What she saw stirred her out of her absorption in her own emotions. All about her faithful fairies were blanching and blushing every shade from paper white to rose red. What was the matter with them?

"What's the matter with you?" she barked peremptorily. "Why are you all staring at me like that?"

"Oh, Your Majesty!" cried gentle Espa and burst into tears. Dreamewet and Vlinder followed suit.

The queen of fairies scratched her head. "I gather something awful has just happened. Sweden, you say? No, *don't* remind me," she recommanded when Kelebek seemed to be about to tell her; instead she reinvoked her forgetfulness spell.

It would seem that whatever had recently taken place was almost as painful to her followers as she gathered it must have been to herself. Yet it was apparent from their manner that it was for her sake they were so wrought up. This would never do. The queen was not accustomed to being looked at with expressions of pity, nor was she about to start. *They'd* better forget as well.

The fairy queen made ready to cast another spell but her experience immediately past prompted her not to be too impulsive this time. She took a moment to plan rather nicely the parameters of the new enchantment. For one thing her followers were not to forget their own names as she discovered, to her dismay, she had done in her own case. Still, she must have had a good and sufficient reason for fugueing from that bit of knowledge. She wondered what it was and felt her curiosity pleasantly piqued. However, she was clever enough to realize it was no good passing oblivion spells, then burning to know what it was you'd forgotten.

With her incantation efficiently drafted the fairy borrowed Ereol's tuning fork and used it for a conjuring staff to give an extra cachet of authenticity to her enchantment. She made her wish. Then she was pleased to see the expressions of shock, embarrassment, indignation, and commiseration fade from her

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followers' faces,

"That's better," sighed the queen. "Now," she went on, "what was I about to do? Where are we off to? or something..."

At that all the fairies looked perplexed. Quite aside from their newly installed memory black-out not a syllable had ever been spoken about where they might go after their Swedish holiday was done. They hummed and hawed and looked blank.

"Never mind," dismissed Lulea-that-was. "Here! Pass before me in alphabetical order and say where you think we might take our way. *NOT* Burzee!" she added. "I'm not going home with my tail between my legs. Let's go somewhere *fun*."

Aaala stepped proudly to the head of the line and, not surprisingly, said "The Hawaiian Islands!"

"Done!" oried the Fairy Queen.

The next thing anyone knew they were all standing in a bewildered bevy on a rankly green mountainside with a dark blue sea beneath them. Not that they could distinguish anything of such colors, of course; this was not odd because it was the middle of the night.

With one accord they all sank down in the rich grass and did nothing for quite a while. Although fairies never need sleep many of them probably drifted off in naps, lulled by the mild breeze that wafted over the peaceful dark landscape. They stayed there for hours, doing absolutely naught. Oh, one fairy did something: at dawn Aaala took her friend Heartsease by the hand and led her off to show her the hollow in the macadamia tree where she had lived immediately prior to her being chosen to join the *Sempernumquam* fairy band. But that's all. They presently strolled back and rejoined their sisters.

Just before anybody got really bored Feebimble said: "Queen Lulea...?"

"What did you call me?" said that queen, removing a grass straw from her lips.

"Why, 'Lulea'," stammered her secretary, taken aback. The queen hadn't told anybody she's blotted out her name along with her memory of recent events.

"What an unpleasant name," said the royal fairy. "Are you sure?"

"Why, yes... at least... for as long as I can remember... 'Unpleasant'? I can't believe it, your grace. You were always so gratified by the name."

"That's right," chimed in Gloriana; "you said it combined the names of your dear parents: Louis and Leah."

"I remember *them* all right!" laughed ex-Lulea with surprised delight. She didn't now remember that she'd erased only her memory of *recent* events. "They were very sweet. I miss them sometimes."

"What ever happened to them, your majesty?" asked Dib.

"Oh, like all fairies, they didn't die; they just faded away... Yes, now I remember: when they finally faded completely was when I took their names. At the time I loved that combination of them, but funny: now I hate it."

The fairies all looked puzzled.

"But in that case," Feebimble took up the word again, "what will now be your grace's appellation?"

"Hmm," mused Lulea-that-was. "Let me mull on it. Of course I must be known as *something* as we make our way back to Burzee. But it must be fitting! I wouldn't want to live in the forest under the name of 'Edward Bear,' for instance."

Her fairy followers came up with various inept suggestions. Finally the queen herself had an idea. Now if she had truly forgotten everything that had happened to her in Sweden it must simply have been her original impulse reasserting itself that caused her to reinvent, off the top of her head, the name "Fay McQueen." "Fay McQueen," she said. "That's it."

Then her court spent a little while practicing getting used to the new name.

c h a p t e r f o u r t e e n

Every reader will have wondered what in the world the young, brilliant (though so modest), adventuresome Dorothy Gale *did* all the time she wasn't traveling in Oz. We never hear of her going to school or of other activities young farm girls in the early years of the century might have been expected to engage in. Apparently she just sat around cheering herself up by playing with her little dog and trying to forget how grey everything was (curious color for waving grain and healthy corn stalks which we learn of as being raised by Farmer Henry).

When she first went to Oz (at latest in early 1899 we can, I think, assume that Dorothy was at any rate no younger than six years old. Her adventures in that land lasted no longer than a few weeks. Then she was home again in Kansas until, in 1905, she went with her ailing and unprosperous uncle on a cruise to Australia. By then, by any reckoning, she would have been twelve, and looked it (Oz non-aging has never been stated to carry over and be effective for persons resuming residence outside the magical country).

Dorothy returned from Australia just in time to be caught in

the celebrated California earthquakes of 1906. Again she spent at most a couple of weeks on the way to and in Oz, the time she and the wizard, O.Z. Diggs, had alarming adventures under ground.

Now don't you know that when Dot returned to Kansas at the end of that third Oz venture she was going to be worried to death over the fate of her San Francisco friends who had been so hospitable to her during her return from Australia, when she learned that the same earthquake that had swallowed her had also leveled great parts of the California city? Of course she was. She telegraphed and phoned and sent a special delivery too. The answer was "We're safe, and hope the same applies to you." Dorothy sat right down and wrote her friends again.

"Dear Miss Matson,

"What a relief to know you are all right! and the dear Captain and Mrs. Matson too. I would have been sick if I heard that your beautiful house was damaged—or that anything had happened to you! Aren't earthquakes awful! I'm sure my life was shortened by a lot of years when I fell through that crack in the earth. But luckily it all ended well, though I have to confess it was the—how shall I say?—'gloomiest' Oz adventure I hope I'll ever have.

"It's getting so hard for me to tear myself away from my Oz friends each time I visit there. The little Queen would like me to stay too, but of course I always tell her I can't abandon my poor dear aunt and uncle—nor, now that I've found you!—such kind friends as you and your family. But oh dear, if life seemed grey here on the farm *before* I ever went to Oz, you can imagine what it's like now.

"There isn't anything to *do*. The cat and dog quarrel like mad and I'm kept on the run separating them, but of course that's not a *full-time* occupation. Sometimes I wish I cared about reading but really, I never crack a book; I wonder if I ever will. Which is not to say I'm not involved in a certain amount of 'literary' activity. Since that author man, Mr. Baum, found out about my first journey to Oz he plagues me all the time for details of all my travels there. I get through a lot of time writing him long descriptions—"

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And so on, for several pages in the same vein.

Let's face it: how're ya gonna keep 'em down on the farm after they've seen Emerald City? Dorothy Gale had now been in the Emerald City four times, if you count the two separate sojourns during her first stay in Oz. She could never forget the glamor of those big green jewels everywhere. Even the green corn of Kansas now looked genuinely grey in comparison.

Hence, every year when the snow cleared she got itchy feet and wanted to GO somewhere. Her secret admirer from Australian days, the Shaggy Man, came along in the nick of time in August 1907 and accompanied her to Oz. Now she had gone there all the possible ways: through the air (in the adventure of *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*), over water (in *Ozma of Oz*), under ground, and OVER the ground. Maybe that was it, she reflected wryly: it could be that she wasn't to see Oz again, now that she'd used up all the different ways of getting there.

And yet, she had got in the habit now of going to visit the Emerald City every year. Was she really going to miss out in 1908? Of course she could go there any day she wanted, just by making the agreed-upon secret sign. But she had to have an excuse! She couldn't just abandon her poor old relations and go traipsing off on her own.

It came then as a considerable relief when in the last days of 1907 a letter arrived from her friends in San Francisco.

"Dear Dorth" (by now the girl friends called each other "Dorth" and "Lurl"),

"Sorry it's been so long since I've written. I seem always to be on the go." (Sadly unlike Dorothy herself.) "But now something extra exciting is going to happen and I had to let you know. You remember how I was named after a ship? Well, now they're going to name a ship after me! Isn't that fun?"

"The thing is: it's all going to happen way over on the east coast. Don't ask me why! The place is Newport News, Virginia. (I do hope the newspaper there is called *the Newport News News!*) Dad and I are going. Mother intends to stay at home and 'hold the fort'. And how are we going to get there? By train, straight

across the country! Dad can't spare the time to go by ship. Ships are the greatest, but they're *not* the fastest.

"Well, I've been looking at time tables and routes and behold! Union Pacific, as the crew more or less flies, goes right through Kansas City. I thought: I can't possibly go through there without seeing Dorothy Gale. So that's what I'm going to do! I've found out there's a spur line to Butterfield and we've made enquiry and it turns out we can arrive at B. at 3 in the afternoon just 2 weeks from today. Please write back at once and say if you can meet us.

"It'll be such fun to see you again! It's been far too many ages since our cruise together..."

Oh, that cruise. Dorothy dropped the letter and flew back in memory to almost two years before. She and her uncle had been sailing for what seemed weeks (and was) across the pacific and had put in, with considerable relief for all concerned, at Hilo, where they were to change ships for the remaining lap of the voyage to San Francisco.

They had a night in a funny old rambling wooden hotel and were down at the docks next day in plenty of time to go aboard—and to watch others going aboard. As Dorothy stood at the rail she suddenly nudged her uncle's elbow. "Look, that must be the captain."

They watched as a handsome man (made more so by his smart uniform) in his fifties came across the gangplank, followed by a lady in a tall plush hat and a sprightly young girl a few years older than Dorothy herself. The Kansas girl was amused to notice that the other was wearing a modified sailor's cap and carrying a fishing rod over her shoulder. "I guess she must like the water," Dorothy giggled, and Uncle Henry nodded solemnly.

Of course in the little world of a trans-Pacific combined freight and passenger ship it wasn't long before Dorothy and Lurline Matson became acquainted. It was the name that did it. Looking over the passenger list Dorothy was struck by the fact that the captain's (pretty obviously) daughter was called *Lurline*. 'Hm,' said the girl to herself, a chord of memory plucked, and she set herself to think where she had heard the name before.

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By the time she ran into Miss Lurline on deck Dorothy was ready. "Yes," she said gravely, when they had introduced themselves, "I suppose you're named after the famous fairy."

"'Famous fairy'," laughed Lurline. "What are you talking about, my dear young lady? I was named after a ship!"

That sounded like a story worth hearing and Miss Lurline was not at all averse to telling it, as the girls settled in canvas chairs against the bulkhead. "Start right at the beginning," urged Dorothy. "I love a story."

"'Beginning'? Hm, where would that be?" wondered the maritime girl. She had the data at her fingertips but how far back should she start? Still, it was a lovely spring day and in the lea from the breeze quite balmy on deck. She settled back with eyes half closed. "I guess it all began on the River Rhein," she said.

"'Rhein'?" said Dorothy, on whom formal schooling had made but little impression. She was glad that Lurline had said "river." That was at least a clue.

"Yes, in Germany. Well, Holland too apparently, and Switzerland, but it was in the German part that there used to be a siren on the cliffs—"

"A what?"

"A siren. You know: a sort of irresistible girl who led sailors to destruction on the rocks—oh, how funny!" Lurline broke off.

Dorothy waited patiently but the captain's daughter seemed lost in thought. Finally the Kansan prompted again. "What was it about the siren on the rocks?"

Miss Lurline came out of her daydream. "Oh, it's just that mother must have been a siren, a Lorelei, herself..."

That sounded like yet another story and soon Dorothy heard it as well. "Let's see if I can tell both these tales at once," said Lurline.

"First, there's the Lorelei—pronounced 'Laura-lye'—also sometimes written 'LURLEI'—and that's 'Lurr-lye': more like my own name. Apparently there was just one of her and she was called 'The Lorelei', kind of like 'The Sphinx' or 'The Minotaur.' Anyway she was simply gorgeous and she sat on a rock—a cliff, actually—

beside the Rhine, combing her hair with a golden comb and singing a wild song, which enticed fishermen and sailors to shipwreck on the rocks.

“Later on somebody wrote an opera called *Lurline*, all about a lovelorn water sprite and pretty obviously based on the legend of the Rhine maiden. The name from the opera was chosen by a rich family named Spreckels who called their yacht by it and the Spreckels in turn were very kind to my Dad when he was just starting out as a seaman. He sailed with them lots of times on *Lurline*—”

Dorothy broke in: “I notice sometimes you say ‘Lerr-lye’n’ but your own name you pronounce ‘Lerr-LEEN.’ How come?”

Miss Matson looked a bit awkward. “Oh, you’ve caught me,” she said. “Obviously, coming from ‘Laura-LYE’ the name ought to be ‘Lurr-lye’n.’ But somehow we always say ‘Lurr-leen’ in the family. I guess it sounds prettier. There’s something about that ‘eye’ sound that isn’t so appealing...”

She was quite right, and may have been one of the first consciously to register a sound shift that has become general in American parlance: the rejection of the ‘eye’ phoneme in favor of ‘ee’ in many words ending in ‘-ine’ or ‘-ein.’ Thirty years later it would be common practice to pronounce ‘carbine’ as ‘carbeen’ and even ‘Frankenstein’ became ‘Frankensteen’ (and similarly with many Jewish names in ‘-ein’). The flight from ‘eye’ grew even more widespread and a word such as ‘archive’ began, in certain quarters, to be pronounced ‘ar-keev.’

“But to go on: when Dad began to have his own ships he called one of them ‘Lurline’ in honor of the yacht. That was a 135-foot wooden brigantine—” Miss Matson had to stop and explain to landlubber Dorothy what a brigantine was: a two-masted sailing vessel with a square-sailed foremast and a main mast with triangular sails in front and behind. “It was launched in California in 1877 and made its maiden voyage from San Francisco to Hilo in June of that year.

“That’s when Mother got into the act. She was a schoolteacher making her first trip to the Sandwich Islands—what we mostly

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call 'Hawaii' now. She sailed on the *Lurline*. And that's what I've just realized is so funny..."

"What?"

"Well, mother must have been a sort of Lorelei herself but with a twist. You see, my father crashed the ship against the rocks—and my mother was the first one he rescued. Of course, he'd noticed, and fallen in love with, her on the ship. But she didn't lure him onto the rocks in order to kill him, like any ordinary old siren. She did it so he could rescue her and find out he loved her!

"No wonder they named me 'Lurline'!"

c h a p t e r

f i f t e e n

"What are you doing, dear?"

Ozma leaned from the rock she was sitting on to peer over Lana's shoulder. The little girl was writing on her pocket pad.

"Oh, it's just a little lyric—to pass the time, you know," explained the young Winkie. She handed her work to the fairy, who read:

"There's wizards in the wind,
their beards long and billowing and white.
Their robes flutter all around,
scattering magical dust in their paths.
The dust sparkles and glows for an instant,
then fades from sight,
but remains visible in my heart:
my heart
that refuses to let go
of childhood dreams...
and wizards in the wind."

"But this is charming, Lana!" cried the queen, delighted. "I

didn't know you wrote."

Lana looked at the Oz ruler sceptioally. "The first your majesty knew of me was through something I wrote."

"Oh, of course!" Ozma blushed. "But that was a letter. I mean I didn't know you were a poetess."

"I'm not," disclaimed the little girl. "I just writes all sorts of things—in all sorts of styles. Sometimes some of it may rhyme a little, or have a bit of a swing to it. But it's really just thoughts, impressions, not really poetry."

"Anyway," pursued Ozma, "it's very nice. Do carry on. And did you see wizards in the wind just now?"

"I thought I did, actually, at one point," admitted the child, "but I must have been mistaken. There certainly aren't any around here just now, are there?" She gazed out on the level featureless greyness of the Impassable Desert. "I'm hungry," she added.

"I'll bet you are. I could do with a little something myself," confessed Ozma. But, wandless, there was not much she could do about it.

Lana kept on gazing. "Doesn't it look a bit lavender to you down that way, your grace?" she said and pointed to the south.

"Do call me 'Ozma,' dear," inserted the princess. "All my young girl friends do. And we are going to be friends, aren't we?"

For answer Miss Peethisaw got to her feet and drew near the boulder throne, where she placed a small kiss on the fairy's cheek. "It *IS* purplish, isn't it?" she pursued.

"What is, dear?"

"The horizon. Look." As Ozma followed the direction of the girl's finger she soon became convinced that there was, indeed, something markedly mauve about the meeting of sand and sky that way.

"Let's walk toward it," the girl ruler proposed. "Lulea will soon be able to trace us, wherever we go. Anyway, I wonder if she's coming...!" It had now been seven hours since she'd dispatched the yellow hen to fetch the fairy queen. What could have happened to hold them up? No wonder she and Lana were both bored and hungry.

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In little more than an hour of brisk stepping out the pair crossed gratefully into the Gillikin country and left the tedious desert behind. 'Now things can begin to happen,' thought each of the young ladies, though without communicating her thought to the other.

Things did. The first thing to happen was their arrival in mid-afternoon at a vineyard. In Gillikinland the purple grapes get ripe all year round so even though it was June there was nothing surprising about seeing the workers out in the plantation filling a cart with the lustrous clusters.

"May we help?" called Ozma as they got closer.

"Sure," said the complacent peasants and paid little attention as the newcomers wandered down the rows, snipping bunches with secateurs they borrowed, and incidentally not drawing back either from making a good meal of rich grapes as they worked.

At work-day's end the two waved goodbye as the campesinos moved off with their laden cart. "Oh, what's that way?" called Ozma a moment belatedly and pointed to the path that trended upward to the south.

A bandanna-headed woman looked back. "That way? Oh, that's the way up to the ice plateau."

Ozma knew Gillikinland was the most mountainous part of Oz. She and her companion would have to face heights and climbing before long in any case, and at the moment a bit of ice sounded quite inviting, after the dust of the Winkie country and the barren dryness of the desert. The two hiked on.

"It's so funny to see everything purple around us," commented more than once young Lana, who had never traveled in Oz outside the yellow land. "I'm not sure I like it."

"I hope you'll get used to it, dear," urged Ozma. "As ruler I naturally have to like all my country colors equally, and I must say it's quite a relief for me to find that *all* Gillikinland hasn't gone yellow."

"You're right," confirmed the little Winkie. "There's no dusting over with yellow here at all, is there?"

"No; that latest dust storm seems to have blown itself out over the desert. But even so I think we will probably see yellow again

before long. If we're to continue our journey we'd better head west. It's in that direction we're more likely to get a clue as to what's happened to our lost companions."

Thus when they came to the next crossroads Ozma chose the right-hand turning. This proved to lead sharply upward and the going became more of an effort. The path was now a rugged trail. The villages and houses Ozma had thought to see were nowhere visible. Evening was coming on and she began to be a bit concerned. There would be no tenting out tonight in a pretty pavilion raised by her friend the Wizard out of her own pocket handkerchief.

Any shelter at all was going to have to do. They had been climbing for several hours; when they saw it: standing in a clearing a hundred yards off from a cross-way on the level heights to which they had now attained: an abandoned building looking like a disused general store.

"I'm sorry, Lana," apologized the fairy as they turned in that direction, as if she were herself somehow to blame for being nearly as powerless as her little companion to create any coziness about them wherein to get through the night.

"Never mind," said Lana. She walked ahead through the brittle stalks of dead weeds in the field. "Morning will come."

It did, eventually, though there had been suffering in the meantime. Inside the derelict building there was just daylight enough remaining for the two girls to see to drag dusty sheets of fallen paneling to cover holes in the floor in the most protected corner of a room. Perhaps the place *had* been a store, or a barn and farmhouse in one?, since an outer room on the far side contained a drift of grey dusty straw. The concrete floor there was *too* hard to sleep on and they carried armfuls of the musty grass to their chosen bower on more resilient wood.

Ozma's unaided fairy power was just sufficient to be able to place around each of them a cocoon of warmth—in lieu of bed-clothes. Even that protection was perhaps in large part psychological. The two talked quietly together through much of the night but exhaustion at last claimed them in sleep despite cold and dis-

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comfort.

When Ozma woke and sat to rub the grit and dust from her eyes she saw Miss Peethisaw sitting on the floor by a low window writing. She went nearer and silently looked.

“The structure of rough wood
and corrugated iron
stood in high grass,
that sprouted rank and weedy.
It stood at the junction
of dusty roads;
and marked a barter station
where people emerged
from among the rocks
to exchange strange stones
found in extinct streams
for special goods
and magical seeds.”

The princess glanced at the girl in admiration. Her imagination was outside the ordinary. “I love the mystical bite you bring in, Lana,” commented the queen. “‘Magical seeds’: now where did they come from?”

“I don’t know. They just occurred to me. (Maybe it was something I dreamed—something I felt we could use—like wizards in the wind. But they wouldn’t do us much good now. Look!”

The girl pointed out the window to where fleecy white snow covered the weed-filled fields. At least it was prettier than it had been yesterday!

“Hm,” said Ozma, not really pleased. “I agree it doesn’t look like seed-planting time. I *thought* it had grown colder and of course we were warned that somewhere up here was to be found an ‘ice plateau.’ Still, somehow I didn’t expect...in June—”

“But you know Oz, Ozma,” rebutted Lana, putting down her pencil. “Grapes ripe one minute; snowing, the next.”

The two girls remained looking out the broken window. Instinctively they drew together. The outlook was decidedly blue. Though, with their warmth balloons about them, they were at the

moment not in acute discomfort, there was little to look forward to: no chance of a bath, nothing to eat, and nobody feeling really well slept out. On the other hand there was much to dread: either the bleak boredom of remaining in the derelict house another day or the physical misery of venturing out into the snow to try to make their way—who knew where?

c h a p t e r s i x t e e n

As it happened, Billina had not previously met the Queen of the Fairies. Hence, when she turned from the contemplation of tropical seas on the railing to which she had fluttered and looked at the (apparently) young lady closest to her on the spotless deck, she did rather a double take. She hadn't somehow expected Lulea to be quite that color. But that was silly traditional unimaginative thinking. Why shouldn't a fairy queen be a nice chocolate shade? or even purple! or green...?

"Pardon me," she said, "are you Queen Lulea?" But, alack, here in the great world the hen's question came out as just a polite mild clucking.

Fairy Butterfly looked down at her feet, to which the chicken had approached, there at the outer edge of the group surrounding their fairy leader. Ozma's spell, with wise built-in precaution, had not delivered Billina closer to Lulea herself lest she be trampled as the fairy girls clustered about their queen to hear the jokes with which she was regaling them as the sleek ship scudded westward over the smiling sea.

"Well, fan mah brows" exclaimed the fairy. "A chiggen! Whea'd

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yo' come fum?"

"Oz!" explained the hen. "Well, just north of it, that is. But please! take me to your leader." Somehow she now sensed that this was not Lulea.

"Hey! yo' gals!" cried Butterfly, delighted. "Looky heah! A chiggen! Ain' dat sum'n?"

Now if there's one thing fairies like more than another it's hens and chickens. Perhaps the wise Ozma had also had that fact in mind when she selected her envoy (admittedly, the range of choice available to her had not been great) to the court of the great immortal (—and the court just turned out to be a tennis court marked out on the main deck of a middle-sized ocean steamer). In any case, the fairies turned as one woman (they'd heard all their queen's jokes before anyway, lots of times) and went into raptures about the unexpected addition to their party.

"A *chicken!*" cried Fyerril.

"Let me get *AT* the dear bird!" almost screamed Zyzzifer and broke through to seize up the startled fowl in her arms.

"It's a hen," constated Mariposa.

"Hen, schmen," blurled Zyzzifer. "It's a chicken, regardless," and thirteen of the fairies got into a discussion as to the extent to which hens and chickens are synonymous or not.

When the furore died down the bird had been transferred to the safekeeping of the leader of the fairy band, Mrs. McQueen, who soothed her ruffled feathers and proposed a question that still had not been settled since Butterfly's original exultation: "I wonder where you came from..."

"Oz!" squawked Billina but by this time knew too well how little her words availed. She was delighting in her popularity but suffered severely from frustration at being unable to communicate. She herself had overlooked it but surely Ozma would have remembered this detail before sending her out into the great world to transact business. Of course the girl ruler knew that Lulea could cast an instant spell to enable the hen to talk fairy language, or the fairies to speak Henglish, but the hurdle was to get the queen to realize that here *WAS* an occasion for communication. 'Oh!'

thought Billina, 'if only the dear princess had thought of providing me with a leg band that said "Billina has a message," or something—!'

As it was, the fairies just assumed that the chicken had escaped from the galley and they soon trooped down there to enquire of the cooks if one of their layers was missing. When they learned that one was not their delight knew no bounds. "Oh, lovely!" they cried to the Turkish scullery boy who was showing them round. "We'll keep her for a pet."

To the practical Turk this seemed an impractical plan. He had a better idea. "You give me bird," he suggested, pinching Billina's breast familiarly. "I make you boiled hen water."

"'Boiled hen water'!?" exclaimed Mrs. McQueen. "Do you mean chicken soup? The very idea!" she fumed in dudgeon and seizing the bird from the cook's grasp she stalked out of the galley without a word of thanks to the poor immigrant. All her train followed after.

They installed Billina on the chifferobe in the cabin of Queen Lulea-that-was and all might have been well if the steward had not come to turn down the bunk a scant half hour later.

"No poultry allowed in passengers' quarters," he announced in tones of obvious regret. "Board of Trade regulations."

"Oh, dear," exclaimed Mrs. McQueen. "How very distressing. What are we to do? I'm not sure I any longer want to face the voyage without my loving hen beside me."

"It'll have to go as deck freight," declared the steward. "But don't worry. I'll have the ship's carpenter knock up a crate for your pet and it can stay right outside the cabin door."

This seemed the only solution and ex-Lulea gave way. She went down with Billina to the carpenter's shop and to the very bench itself. It was the end of her happiness and perhaps she knew it. But if she did, she didn't do enough about it. She could have defied the steward's command later that night—but, alas, she did not.

'Uh-oh,' thought Billina as the coop door slammed to behind her. This seems familiar! And it got to seeming more familiar yet

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as the night wore on, the sea rose from mild swells to higher billows, and a sub-tropical storm came on.

At least there were no icebergs to fear and the ship plowed onward, the captain well aware of the storm warnings that had been received. The steward, however, was not thus aware, and no more was the captain, of objects not lashed down on deck.

The ship heaved more and more. The crate shifted position. Presently both ship and coop were outright tossing. Spray dashed over the bows. The deck was awash. When the vessel plunged into the deepest wave-trough yet, deck chairs went floating, quoits flew through the air, and a chicken coop with a great deal of clatter and bustle made its way over-side.

Billina folded her wings with resignation. "Here we go again," she said.

c h a p t e r s e v e n t e e n

Fay McQueen and her court had spent several days lolling around on that Hawaiian island where they first arrived, before they got too bored. They were taking the sun, discreetly clad *of course*, on their broad seaside cliff top one afternoon when Fay caught sight of a white sailing ship floating gently along on the deep blue, some distance out below them.

“How romantic,” the queen sighed, and most of her band agreed with her.

“And getting more so,” said Aaala, the local expert. “In my time it was all sail out this way. But now! that’s the first one we’ve seen so far.” Since the fairies had been on the island there had been a number of ugly black smoke-spouting steamers go by within sight of the headland, but *they* didn’t rouse anybody to romantic daydreams.

“I wonder what it’s like aboard,” mused Mrs. McQueen. Her knowledge of seafaring life was virtually nil.

“Why don’t we go look?” suggested Ereol. A slight odor of sizzling came from her spirit-curling iron.

“Hey?” said Fay, startled. “That’s an idea. Why don’t we?”

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For her followers her question was their command. Before anyone had time even to realize that this was a daring bid to escape ennui they were all clinging in the rigging of the bark *Harvester* as it made its way rather sedately over the smooth sea from Honolulu to the Big Island.

"Whee! What fun," said Fay as she rode up and down on the gently pendling shrouds.

"Whee!" answered her devoted followers, all drastically reduced in size so that there'd be *room* for them in the shrouds.

"What do we do now?" asked Wob.

"Oh, after we've pendled a bit more we'll go have a look round," announced Fay with assurance. "That's what we came aboard for."

"Like we are?" asked Titania. "I mean, what will the sailors think if they see twenty-eight fairies?"

"That their grog was stronger than they thought it was," put in the impudent Moth.

"Shh," said Fay. "There's one of them looking now. Just to prevent confusion it might be better to make ourselves invisible."

They did so without loss of time, leaving just the one seaman to believe he'd had an hallucination, and to carefully say nothing about it to his messmates.

Concealed from view, the fairies in a body toured the ship and saw the bridge and the bilge, the poopdeck and the forecastle, the galley and the accommodations for ten passengers. "Oh, how cozy!" cried fairy Fay, peering into a tiny two-man cabin. "One could be very snug in here." Sometimes fairies got these longings to experience simple human life-styles.

The bark reached Hilo on the big island about midnight and the fairies wondered what to do then. Hanging around town in the dark was their idea of nothing to do. They presently found their way to the tiny botanical gardens and there curled up in flower cups to doze the night out for lack of more exciting pastimes.

With the stamen of a tiger lily sticking in her back queen Fay lay thinking how comfortable the bunk on the *Harvester* would be

(with herself at a different size, of course). But alack, they had seen that there was accommodation only for ten aboard that ship. Next morning the fairies covered the waterfront looking for something a bit more capacious.

Their luck was in. Admittedly the ship was one of the ugly coal-burning steel steamers but it was a regular passenger ship, one of the first in the strictly mainland-Hawaii trade, and not merely a raw-sugar freighter with a few passenger berths.

For the occasion the fairies got themselves up as missionaries and Salvation Army lasses, turned some fairy gold into just enough real gold to cover their passage, and went aboard, to while away the time until the late afternoon sailing. The run to Honolulu was only an overnight affair.

They'd been lucky with the weather too, so far. But such luck doesn't last forever. Queen Fay was thoroughly enjoying her night in the commodious luxury of her first-class cabin when suddenly she found herself on the floor.

Her surprise knew no bounds. She stumbled to the porthole and looked out. Nothing was to be seen, of course. A weak light farther, along the deck revealed nothing substantive. She only knew the ship was going violently up and down, back and forth, even, so it felt, round and round. Even as a fairy she hardly dared venture outside in the raging storm, and to what purpose?

Then she remembered. Oh, that poor chicken she and her band had befriended the previous afternoon! What would have been its fate? That the hen and her makeshift coop any longer survived on deck seemed highly unlikely. Quickly Lulea-that-was passed a spell: that if the yellow hen wasn't already dead she wasn't to be, but was to make a landfall in good order.

Fay groped her way back to her bunk and crawled in it. She hung in there for dear life and presently when the gale abated a little she succeeded in falling into a troubled sleep. The night was not, alas, the session of cosy comfort she had envisioned.

She dragged herself out bleary-eyed at dawn, reflecting that after all she'd felt fresher after the night in the tiger lily in the botanical gardens. Mab, Wob, Dib, and the rest had not fared much

out to the curb.

'Heavens, what a wreck!' thought Miss Lurline to herself when she saw the carriage that awaited. Aloud she said, "What a delightful period piece. Where did you get it?"

"Don't laugh," warned Dorothy. "That's the buggy I went to Oz in. It's terribly shabby, I know, but you see, I didn't want to change anything. Every scratch and dent is a souvenir from some adventure along the way to Oz. The carriage was almost new when we started out that time. The canopy cloth was really shiny. But it was a mess by the time Zeb got it back to the ranch—"

"But how did it get here?" demanded the visitor. "It's a long way from California to Kansas. You never drove it!?"

"Oh, no, I got uncle to pay for it and have it shipped, and Zeb came along with it for a holiday—and Jim!" Dorothy said when she saw the horseloving Lurline go to the animal and clap his muzzle comradely.

"Nice old thing," approved Miss Matson. "Rather sleek. I see you've been taking good care of him. But he *IS* rather old."

"Oh, ancient," laughed Dorothy. "Aren't you, Jim?" The horse nodded complacently. "Yes," went on the girl, "since I got both horse and buggy safely here I've kept them up the very best I could—without, however, removing any of the battle scars from the buggy. You see, I treasure everything that reminds me of the magical land."

"Oh, that magical land of yours!" said Lurline as the girls crammed themselves into the narrow back seat. Uncle Henry took the reins and they were off. "I never quite know whether to laugh or go blind when I hear you talk about 'Oz.' Can there *really* be such a place?"

Dorothy pouted. "You've got San Francisco," she riposted, "and all of the Sandwich Islands—and they're marvelous. Why can't I have Oz?"

"It's a little *too* marvelous—to hear you talk." Lurline gave her friend a squeeze. "But let's not quarrel about it. Come on: tell me about your latest adventures there! You've been back since last we met."

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“Twice, actually. Once just after we two got acquainted when I fell through the earthquake—and then again last year.” And Dorothy told the tale of her trips with the Wizard and with the Shaggy Man, not to mention various animals and young boys who’d got into the acts. Whether the stories were true or not Lurline enjoyed them as much as if they were.

Nor were they even finished when the buggy pulled up in front of the new(ish: just eight years old) farmhouse Uncle had built since the earlier ramshackle cottage had departed for Oz. Miss Matson, who lived in a virtual palace, was polite as she could be about the modest appointments of this dwelling. But before she had a chance to do that she met Dorothy’s Aunt Em.

Lurline’s heart went out to her when she saw the gaunt careworn woman on the narrow porch of the already sun-bleached farmhouse. Aunt Em was nervous. She’d heard long and often about the glamors of the Matson mansion near Golden Gate Park. She was also tired after a week of doing what she could to make her humble home worthy to receive such eminent guests. Her old-fashioned finery looked odd in contrast to the smart sea-going modernity of the Matsons’ attire.

Everything that made the place and people unsuitable made Lurline like them that much more. Underneath her active girl-sport’s manner was a heart that was touched with tenderness when she saw people meaning well and trying to do their best. Not pity! No, pity was a suspect emotion that meant “You’re just a poor miserable creature and I in my secure and exalted position can see it clearly.” “Pity” was really just a synonym for “well-meaning contempt” and *that* wasn’t what she felt.

She stepped to Aunt Em and turned their handshake into an encirclement of the farm woman’s arm as they moved into the house. There was more to feel “tender” about in the specklessly clean austerity of the front room. Then two widely loved celebrities of Oz broke any ice that might have been about to form by staging a spat in the kitchen.

Toto at nine-years-plus should have been a middle-aged gentledog but whenever he caught sight of Dorothy’s cat Eureka

he became a lively juvenile again. His yaps and growls the white cat returned with interest, especially today when the nerves of both animals would be at the stretch. They knew very well what was planned and Eureka was all atwitter with anticipation of seeing again her (also) old acquaintances, while Toto was all set to spoil it for her if he could.

The three women appeared abruptly at the open kitchen door to see Eureka on the drain board, hissing electrically, with arched back and all claws a-tingle, while Toto on his hind legs strained to get nearer and barked furiously. "Toto!" shouted Dorothy, "stop it at once!"

"Eureka," called Miss Lurline fetchingly and the cat bounded over Toto's head to the central work table, narrowly missing the big glass bowl of purple punch that rested there, and then leapt onto the collar of the heiress' middy blouse.

After that diversion everybody felt at ease and the girls did not stand on ceremony at leaving the grown-ups to their own socializing while they ran upstairs to Dorothy's garret room, Toto skittering after, and Eureka safe in Lurline's arms.

A little later, after Dorothy had opened the old trunk and displayed the few souvenirs she had brought home from Oz, and from less "marvelous" places such as Australia, the girls sat, each in a corner of the window seat at the gable end and dreamed. Dorothy held black Toto and Lurline still plied white Eureka with reunion attention.

"Well, yes, I see what you mean," said the California miss, gazing out at the snow-covered fields that stretched with very little variation to the horizon's end. "After a few years it could get a little monotonous. Oz must surely have a lot more to offer."

"And yet I love it here," mourned Dorothy. "When we have a good year—and of course in the snowy wintertime as now—it's not grey at all. I know I'd miss it if I decided to go to Oz to stay. Yet when I think I *could* go to Oz any minute I like but only duty keeps me here, sometimes I think I hate it!"

Lurline looked at her friend speculatively—and with a secret sparkle in her eye. "You need a change," she said.

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"Don't I know it," said the Kansan rather bluntly. Then she brightened. "That's why it's so wonderful you're here. I'll live *your* travels at second hand! Now tell me everything you're going to do between now and when you get back to San Francisco!"



Lurline absolutely insisted on being allowed to help Aunt Em do the dishes after the rather gala supper. Every dish in the crockery cupboard had come into play, so there was enough to do. The two men had gone for a walk with Dorothy in the early sunset.

"Mrs. Em," said Lurline, polishing a plated gravy ladle, "does Dorothy have enough to do here on the farm? I mean, do you ever get the feeling she's... restless?" The girl didn't like to say "bored."

"Oh, you've noticed that too, ey, Miss?" Em sloshed at the cake of Octagon soap vigorously. "No, she don't and that's a fact. She's fidgetty a lot of the time and I reckon it's only natural—"

"And yet *you're* so busy all the time, and your husband too," Lurline broke in.

"But that's the way we want it!" the aging woman intervened. "Dorothy's mother was... delicate—and much more of a lady than what I am. We've always wanted Dorothy to be a lady too, not just a common farm girl. So we've never asked her to do anything—leastways, nothin' coarse."

Lurline folded up the tea towel and began to line up glasses on a tray. "That's not very fair, seems to me," she judged bluntly. She herself thought nothing of mucking out a stable.

"But we couldn't have Dorothy swillin' the pigs! or milkin'—or, or tossin' hay!" protested the farm wife, fair scandalized.

"It's not *not* doing anything that makes a lady," declared Miss Matson forthrightly. "It's what you *do* do and the spirit in which you do it." She glanced aside at her hostess speculatively. "Would there be any chance of Dorothy going on to college?"

Aunt Em looked at her guest with a very sad eye. This was too painful. But she was not the moaning and mourning type. She

decided to put a sprightly face on it. "Dorothy'll be lucky if she keeps on eatin' regular," she blurted. "Farm times aren't good around here. We do a good bit o' worryin' "

Lurline hung up the dish towel. "Mrs. Em," she said, coming straight to the point, "I want to invite your niece to go on with us to the launching, and then for some shopping—and then—well, we'll see what happens. I think it would be... so broadening for Dorothy—and such fun for me!"

Aunt Em put her wet hands on her hips and looked at the heiress admiringly. She knew what Miss Matson meant, but all she said was, "Dorothy's found the friend she deserves."

The two were standing together at the storm-door to the porch when the strolling trio came up the path, stamping off the snow. Dorothy ran ahead and seized her aunt's hands. "Oh, Aunt Em, you'll never guess what! The Captain's invited me to go along to the launching—and oh! I'd love to go."

c h a p t e r

n i n e t e e n

The girls, the older one and the very much younger one, could not make up their minds. In the end the weather made them up for them. The snow began again and the wind got up. Walking on across the dread "ice plateau" would be frightful in such circumstances. Suppose they found no other shelter when night came on? They did not dare risk it and remained for another miserable night in the house at the crossroads. Lana Peethisaw wrote a verse for the occasion.

"Around the isolated house
on the ice plateau
snow fell and never thawed.
The wind howled,
tearing at a corner tower.
Its only light fluttered
but it was there to welcome
a rare unwise traveler
seeking something
in that remote country.
But what he knew not."

"A light?" said Ozma, reading the composition. "I only wish we had one."

"That was my wish too," admitted the poetess. "Sometimes my writing is about what I wish, or dream rather than what is."

"Oh, Lana," cried Princess Ozma in a rare moment of near-despair, "can't you write something gay, cheerful? I really need it in a pinch like this."

Miss Peethisaw sat down again at a window and by the last grey light of the wintry day wrote, after much thought, the following:

"I seem to have lost my buggle boo.
He must have run far away.
I looked under the bed,
and out in the shed,
and everywhere he liked to play.

"I believe I will miss him a lot,
my beloved buggle boo.
But my mom doesn't mind.
Please don't think her unkind.
He lived in her best tennis shoe."

The fairy princess laughed long and heartily and then gave Lana a fond hug. The poem had given her courage to face the night, which, just then, was as much as she could ask.

The night was got through somehow or other. Time has a way of going on like that: you think you can't bear a thing and then time comes along and carries you away, back into daylight, for instance, and then you find matters have got a little better.

It was that way for the girls. When they struggled awake on the second morning, stiff, aching, famished, and more unwashed-feeling than ever, the sun was gleaming brightly over a white world. Ozma ran to a window and looked out. "Oh, Lana, how beautiful! Today *must* be better..."

Little Lana agreed with her. "Let's leave right away, shall we? Anything will be better than stopping on here."

But now that they came to depart, nostalgia set in. They wan-

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dered one last time through the tattered dusty rooms where they had been so uncomfortable but they remembered the long intimate talks they had had and how they had suffered but how they had *lived*. To experience *anything* (except, just possibly, unbearable pain) is better than to experience nothing. Lana knew that and could never stop being grateful. She had told Ozma all about it during their time in the derelict building and Ozma understood.

“So white and clean,” said the little girl as they stepped out into the snow. “I know I’d feel ever so much cleaner and fresher if I could just roll in it.”

“I’ve thought that too,” said Ozma as they made their way along gingerly in their, anyway, serviceable walking boots. “And I could warm us up again sufficiently afterwards. But we’d just have to get back into the same grimy wrinkled clothes. I’ve always especially hated having to put on dirty clothes when all clean myself.”

One might wonder when the queen of Oz had had any such unpleasant obligation as that. But perhaps she was referring to a time when she lived as a boy in the hut of a witch, a place not noted for its bath and laundry facilities.

“We’d better leave it,” suggested Ozma and Lana was forced to agree with her.

“If only there was something to eat,” said the five-year-old, stooping to catch up a handful of damp snow which she pressed to a lump of near-ice and popped into her mouth. “That might almost make up for feeling so unwashed.”

Ozma could not agree more. Though a fairy she thoroughly enjoyed the pleasures of the table. Why, nothing, she suddenly reflected, in her life devoid of the intimacies of love, gave her more physical pleasure than the flavors of fresh-baked bread, almond chocolate, steamed clams, violet lozenges, crisp chicken skin, malted milk, lobster mayonnaise, pecan pie, rum toffee, popcorn, maple syrup, or potato chips. But it was madness to think of those things now! Instead she said consolingly:

“I know. But though we may grow desperately hungry or

terribly thin, this is after all Oz: we can't actually die."

'No,' thought Lana, 'I can't do that.' Aloud, she said something more concretely encouraging. Then they plodded on, trying to concentrate on the truly glorious beauty of sun sparkling in a thousand ice drops on the needles of pine and fir.

c h a p t e r

t w e n t y

Billina squawked and clung. That's about all she could do.

The wooden crate was unable to sink so she had no chance of drowning, unless she deliberately got down on the water side of it and stuck her head through the slats—and she wasn't about to do that. No, she was just going to be vastly wet and uncomfortable for many hours, or even days or weeks, until the box should fetch up against a shore somewhere.

Actually that happened rather soon, helped or not by an unsuspected fairy spell. Billina woke from a nap of sorts to find both sea and sky blue and a small island at no great distance. By dint of patient waiting she drifted up on the strand in an hour or so.

Now what? The hen looked out enquiringly. There was no one about who could help her out of her wooden prison. Anyway she was not sure she wanted to see any human beings capable of such. She had noticed that humans had a tendency, if one was a chicken, to help one out of the fire (symbolically speaking) into the frying pan.

She was however ravenously hungry and eventually starvation was going to diminish even her fear of being served up for

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dinner. Meanwhile her sharp eye discovered some infinitesimal sand fleas and sea slugs in the beach slurry underneath her and she consumed those. Faintly sustained she looked about her more attentively.

This was a very strange island. The sand grains were as fine as powder. Not far off fully formed coconut palms leaned aslant of the coastline, and were all of four feet in total tallness. Away off in the interior of the island, about half a mile away, a miniature volcano perhaps twenty feet high puffed companionably. Birds, in comparison with which normal hummingbirds would appear gigantic, flitted about.

It was one or more of these who finally brought the yellow hen relief. They happened to perch on her crate and cocked their heads to peer at her enquiringly. "Are you a great Auk or something?" they enquired in Avian (spoken and understood by birds everywhere).

"Great auk?" squawked the hen. "Not that I ever heard of. I'm a normal-sized domestic fowl temporarily incarcerated but longing to be free."

"Oh," said a spokesbird, whose name was Patatipiapiapaatapapita. "We thought you might be a great auk. You're the greatest bird *WE*'ve ever seen."

"Why, thank you," simpered Billina, confused by the nuances of the word "great."

"Are you dangerous?" went on Patatipiapiapaatapapita.

"Dangerous to whom?" enquired Billina. "I'm no cannibal, if that's what you mean. I never attack my own kind—birds, that is."

"That's good to know," said the resident bird, a dwarf member of a species known as *Walaka'akukialakakua ilex latex*. "In that case we might help you to get free."

"Splendid!" crowed the hen, now feeling extremely cordial toward the locals—who were about the size of large ladybirds. "How will you do it though?" she pursued, impressed again by her friends' tininess. "You're so petite. In fact, this is the petitest island I was ever on. Where are we exactly?"

"This is the island of Tinitiwinitihumunuoa'ahonomua sometimes shortened to 'Teentyweent'," informed Patatipiipiapaatapapita. "Why do you ask?"

"Just wondering. Everything seems, so extremely *small*. Or aren't you bothered by that?"

"Bothered? No. We seem to us the size we were meant to be. On the other hand, things that wash up on shore here appear to us enormous. The rest of the world must be inhabited by giants!"

"That's one way of looking at it, indeed," admitted the hen, "—though we in our own way feel quite normal-sized also."

"We had an awful scare a couple of years back. An outer-world-sized human arrived here—"

"Pardon me," broke in Billina. "You say 'outer-world-sized human.' That might seem to imply there were human beings who were some other size."

"Of course there are! Teentyweent's not a desert island! We've got our own resident tribes of humans. They're about as tall as you are—when fully grown. They've got their own towns and villages. There's one just a few dozen yards off in that direction—" The informant bird cocked its head toward the northwest. "And they've reached rather a high level of civilization, it seems."

"Odd one's never heard of this island before," mused the chicken. "You'd think it would be a famous sight-seeing resort: everything so tiny."

"Too tiny," put in Patatipiipiapaatapapita. "That is: just tiny enough! People on ships passing by probably figure it's just an uninhabited rocky islet—and the locals prefer it that way. I believe they go in fear and trembling they'll be overrun by outsider giants one day. It would be the end of their civilization—"

"Civilization'," quoted Billina. "You referred to that before. How civilized can one get? cut off from everywhere."

"Oh, Teentyweent's not cut off from *everywhere*. The humans here maintain cultural contacts with many other *small* societies. Lilliput has quite an imposing embassy in Tiny Town. Teentyweent's a famous vacation resort in the world of miniature.

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People come from across the seas to attend our finishing schools and colleges. Art is exported. A Teentyweent specialty is carving angels on the heads of pins. 'If it's small we've got it all' is the motto of the business community..."

Patatipiipaatapapita went on like that for quite a while, until Billina began to grow restive. She was still feeling damp and hungry and the native birds were beginning to look ever less like birds and ever more like ladybirds. At last she revealed her predicament and her friends' danger. "How'm I going to get out of here end get something to eat—other than yourselves?"

"Eat us?" chirped the birds in alarm arm and rose from the crate to circle in the air. "After such kindness that would be a dismal thing to do!"

"Mm, I rather felt that myself," admitted the hen. "There would seem then to be one of two things you might do: either bring me some provender, or else get me out of here so I can forage for myself."

At that the tiny birds flew off as one, fetched some of their comrades, and began an 'air bridge' operation, freighting in minuscule grains of corn in their beaks and dropping them into Billina's cage, where she eagerly snapped them up.

After an hour or two of that the visitor was replete. Then she had time for social amenities and harked back to a topic that had been started earlier. "I'm sorry," she apologized belatedly, "I think I interrupted you," she said to Patatipiipaatapapita. "You had been about to tell me of a scare you all had some time back."

"Yes! A shipwrecked mariner from the outer world washed up here on a broken spar. He proved to be a holy terror. He's why the local humans are so terrified of anybody else coming here from the outer world. You see, the sailor was not a person of any culture at all. As soon as he got his strength back after washing ashore he set off tramping all over the island. And I mean tramping! Or do I mean *trampling*?! Because that's what he did: flattening forests, grinding gardens into the ground, vandalizing villages. It seemed he didn't take the local culture seriously but regarded it all as one big free toy shop, loading his capacious pock-

ets with everything he could make off with: people's furniture, things out of the shops, farm implements, bicycles, boats—he even took hostages!”

“What? kidnapped people?” gasped Billina. “How shocking.”

“Not quite humans,” admitted the birds. “But almost as bad. At the boarding school in Tiny Town he caught sight of a family of pigs who had been sent there for training—Oh! we have no race prejudice on Teentyweent—and made off with the swine, all nine of them!”

“How dreadful,” sympathized the hen. “And were they never seen again?”

“Not here. Whether they were seen anywhere else we have no way of knowing. When the sailor had pillaged his fill he set out on his spar again, planning to get picked up by a ‘tramp steamer’ or something—so he boasted—and then live high on the sale of the curiosities he had acquired on this island.”

“And what of the pigs’ people?” enquired the yellow chicken. “They must have been distraught when they heard of the kidnapping of their family members.”

“Oh, frantic—from what we’ve overheard. Their father, one Professor Swyne, threatened to come here from half-way round the world—to demand restitution.”

“Where did the nine little Swynes come from?”

“I doubt if you’ll have heard of it,” confided Patatipiipaatapapita. “A place called Oz.”

c h a p t e r t w e n t y - o n e

The fairies really had fun on Oahu. They turned themselves into hummingbirds and sped everywhere. As winged fairies they'd have been able to get about almost as expeditiously but they wanted to avoid the complications that might have arisen if anyone had spied them, twenty-eight strong, at the bottom of his garden. After all, ex-Lulea, as a queen, rather preferred the *TOPS* of gardens, and there the blithesome band would have been discovered and no doubt put to rout that much sooner..

They hung around the hibiscus-crowded gardens of Honolulu for a day. They went up to Diamond Head for the magnificent views of sea and land. They spent a whole day doing their washing and hanging it to dry at the Upsidedown Waterfall. This was a place wonderful enough to make them feel right at home. Rivers that flowed backwards, roads on which vehicles coasted uphill, in short everything which appeared to set the law of gravity at nought was meat and drink to the sprites. It seemed so *magical*. And a cataract that plunged off a mountain brink to be blown upward by the strong and unceasing wind that scoured the valley was just the sort of play pen they adored.

As birds of course they'd have nothing to wash so just for the space of this lark they changed back to fairy form, sudsed up their draperies, and winged it, with themselves *IN* them, back and forth through the upward-flying waters. Then they hung the clothes to dry on cobweb lines on the cliff top. In the sun and prevailing breeze that took about seventy seconds.

While they waited Mme. Mcqueen and Zyzzyfer sunbathed and idled the time in chat. Zyzzyfer, as befitted her spelling, had been the last to join the fairy band and sometimes the Queen adopted a schoolmarmish tone in talking to her. "This is light matter," she said now.

"Light matter'?" replied Zyzzy on cue. She knew that obscure vocabulary was gauntlets thrown down to encourage her to acquire new knowledge.

"Yes," instructed ex-Lulea. "Everything in the universe is divided up into light matter and dark matter. You remember that?"

"Oh, of course," laughed Zyzzyfer easily and immediately remembered rainbows, the square of the hypotenuse, and the speed of light. "Gravity," she said.

"Well, no, actually gravity's one of the dark matters," confessed the queen. "But this is light matter: the strength, speed, and direction of the wind just here combine to be greater than the force of gravity. Hence, the water mounts instead of falling. You see that, don't you?"

"Yes indeed," reassured the pupil. "But gravity now: please explain that again. I can never quite grasp it: why *should* everything be drawn toward the center of bodies of matter? To my mind it would seem much more logical that everything bobbed about loose in the universe without being attracted to anything."

"To *everybody's* mind," dismissed the queen, turning over to get a little sun on her back. "And the universe *IS* logical and so of course gravity isn't what it seems. We—and everything—are not pulled toward the center of massive bodies. We're pushed."

"What by?"

"Dark matter, of course. At once that makes it all logical, doesn't it? Two solid objects can not occupy the same space at the same

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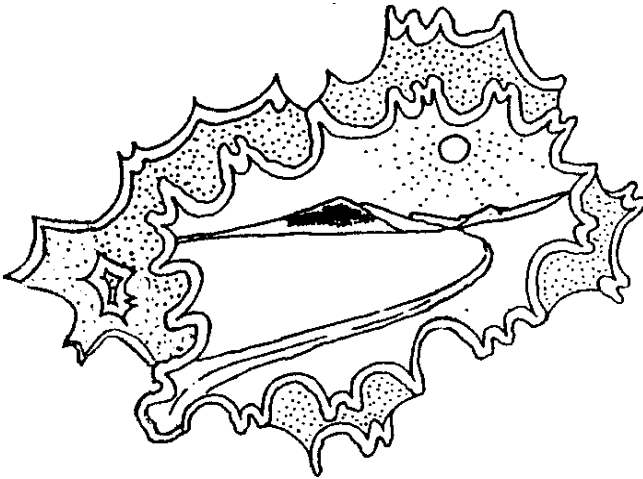
time. The very feeble pressure of the dark matter that fills the universe (all except ten percent, which we see as the light of stars, including our sun) is however just strong enough to press us against the heavenly body nearest us. Since we can't occupy the same space as that body (in our case, the Earth) we cling against its outside. And we call the result gravity."

At this point fairy Zyzzifer always experienced an effect as of drawing aside of veils across her mind. "Of course! and dark matter—this is the part that's so hard to remember!—possesses the qualities of both solids and light waves, or rather, dark waves. It can be perceived as a solid in itself under certain conditions but it can also pass through true solids, sometimes leaving a perceptible result and sometimes not."

"Right!" ohortled the queen. "It's all coming back to you now."

"And to think," sighed Zyzz, reaching for her gossamer petticoat, "that you can control it all, Your Majesty!"

"Well, 'control'," murmured Fay McQueen modestly; "nay rather 'influence.' But of course. What else is one a fairy for?"



c h a p t e r t w e n t y - t w o

“Oh, Dad!” cried Miss Matson, “how terribly disappointing! But how grand!!”

The captain handed his daughter the telegram he had just read out to her. It was from Chief Clerk Printz, Matson Navigation Company, Ferry Building, San Francisco, and read: “You have been named Consul General for Sweden, for California, Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Nevada, Utah, Arizona and Alaska. Imperative you return at once to accept honor at ceremony 13 January. Chargé d’Affaires Ekengren on good-will tour will officiate.”

“Sorry, flickan min,” said the old salt, brushing his walrus moustache across the side of her auburn hair. “You’ll have to take over for me. You can crack a bottle of champagne by yourself, can’t you? You’ve got young Dorothy here to help.”

“I don’t care!” pouted Lurline. “At least—I do: But I want to go back with you!”

“And leave *Lurline II* unchristened? You wouldn’t do that.”

Now it was Miss Gale’s turn to be a tower of strength for her friend as she was torn between two diametrically opposing desires: to turn right around and board the train back to San Fran-

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cisco with her father or to climb the scaffolding at the shipyard two days hence end send a bottle crashing against the bow as the big black brand-new ship slid down the ways.

Dorothy was subtle. She stooped to conquer. She pretended to selfishness in order to get her friend to do what she knew her friend afterwards would be gladdest to recall having done. She said, "Yes, of course! You're disappointed. And I want to share the disappointment with you. We'll go back with the Captain right away and I'll never go shopping in Richmond or see the sights of Washington or anything. I guarantee to feel even flatter than you all the way back through the tiresome train trip to K.C. Since misery loves company, we'll be miserable together—and still have a lot of fun."

Lurline could not help smiling at her friend's droll presentation. But it pointed up a truth for her: it's scarcely fair to get your own back for a disappointment by disappointing others. She swallowed her chagrin and plumped for staying on to launch the *Lurline* on 11 January.

The ceremony went off all right and after all there was a bit of shopping for fallals in Lorfolk. The captain had left behind a generous check. But there was now no question of two unaccompanied teen-age girls attempting the round of big and dangerous cities on their own. They duly boarded their own return train on the appointed day.

"You were right, Dorth," admitted Miss Matson as they trundled across the snow-covered hills of Kentucky. "I wouldn't have felt satisfied with myself if I'd dodged the responsibility of the launching. Rut now I'm going to get my own back after all. Since you felt so keenly my obligations in this affair, it's only just that you come in for the rest of the responsibilities. It's not all over with the launching, you know. There's something called the maiden voyage. Now you wouldn't want to see that spoiled, would you?"

"I'd be very sorry," admitted the Kansas girl. "But it's nothing to do with me, surely?"

"Suppose I make it a condition of my going on the dreary old

cruise that you go along? After all, we've found out we get on like a house afire on these long-drawn expeditions. I could say I can't face the maiden voyage without you beside me!"

"'Dreary'!?" echoed Dorothy. "Do you call an ocean cruise 'dreary'? Why, nothing could be more fun!"

"Fun?! Hanging over the rail and reseeing your breakfast?" said Lurline whimsically. For here was a paradox: Dorothy, the girl from the heart of an inland America a thousand miles from the sea, was an excellent sailor. She'd shown that when she sailed off to Oz in a flying house with never a trace of *mal d'aire*. Her long Pacific voyages after that, including one in a chicken coop, but confirmed her sea legs. Meanwhile Lurline, the girl from the coast, who had virtually been born on a ship, got seasick every time. "Unhrh!" she gloomed, "I can't face it: to get on that thing—even if it is named after me—and sail all the way to Honolulu and *Lurline* again in one swoop."

"Delightful!" thrilled Dorothy. "I can't think of anything niftier. You talked me into it! When do we sail?"

"June sixth, from San Francisco. And get back there June thirtieth. Nearly an entire month at sea!"

"Wonderful. To see dear San Francisco again and all of you! and then to sail across to the Sandwich Islands—"

"People are calling them 'the Hawaiian Islands' more now," reminded Lurline, "the native name. But you remember that."

"Yes. It's going to be exactly like old times. Do you realize it's just a year and three quarters since we first met? and that's *where* we met. Oh, how lovely to be in the islands again!"

Miss Matson was steam-rollered by so much enthusiasm. "I'll pack a supply of Dad's long woolen underwear," she said and assumed a resigned expression.

"Woolen underwear?" said Dorothy in disbelief. "What in the world? That'll be in the middle of the summer."

"Mm," agreed Lurline. "Mother will be furious. 'Woolen underwear's horribly expensive.'"

"But why are you going to wear men's long-johns as we sail the tropic seas?"

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The heiress broke out in delighted laughter. “Not *WEAR* them, silly. It’s for seasickness. I—well, Mother too—we’re the worst sailors in the world. But Dad figured out an excellent remedy. He tears up his woolen underwear and makes hot compresses out of them. To put on our tummies, you know. That feels So good...!”

c h a p t e r t w e n t y - t h r e e

Yes, now it was better: The sun gleamed on and as the day advanced and their exercise was prolonged—the two girl travelers were no more discommoded by the cold. By a little after three in the afternoon they saw the first stones: grey-purplish boulders whose surfaces rose above the level of the snow. By four they trod on pebbles.

And all this while they had seen no people. That was what struck Ozma as eeriest of all. That lonely house at the crossroads had been the last sign of habitation for scores of miles in this most desolate region of Oz. There was no village, no signs even of charcoal burners in the forest. But now that too would change.

“Look!” said Ozma and pointed to foot-marks in the inch-deep frost. The two girls looked behind them and saw, where they two had walked, three lines of footprints. Lana trembled.

They went on and now foot traces followed theirs on both sides and more joined presently and ever more. By late afternoon the couple became aware that grey silent people marched beside them. The girls ought to have rejoiced but somehow they did not. Why did no one speak? either to our travelers or to each other. The

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silent wayfarers moved so slowly too. Tired and stiff as they were after their daylong trudge Ozma and Lana pressed forward much faster.

The Oz princess had some idea by now that, hastening ahead, they two would presently catch up with the leaders of the multitude. Hour after hour, with simulated gaiety and dancing step, she forced the pace. At full dark Ozma and her companion were obliged to droop onto a fallen log and catch their breath. The princess heard her little friend murmur:

“In a stolid crowd
with cares of the world on them,
not one dared stand out.
She danced along,
eyes flashing, beguiling,
setting everyone smiling.”

“How beguiling can you get, my dear!” laughed the older girl. “I haven’t seen one person smile yet.”

“You know my verses are about wishes, your grace,” disclaimed the poetess. “Not quite about things as they merely are but as I would like them to be.”

Ozma didn’t quarrel with that. She only encouraged the younger girl to gather up her courage because it seemed as if they must carry on by night. Not yet had any house or settlement been seen, just the rocky ground and the sparse stunted-looking trees of the highland forest. The ice of the plateau had been left behind but not the plateau itself.

Luckily the night was full of stars and they could see to make their way. Did they not have an impression that their ghostly companions gleamed ever so faintly phosphorescently in the dark? At least Ozma by starlight could see to pick up a fragment of one of the thousands of stones they found under foot.

“Look, Lana,” said she with wonderment in her voice. “This is no ordinary bit of rock outcropping. This stone is carved! See its square corner.”

Miss Peethisaw marveled, and then she had an idea. “There must have been marble cities here on this upland in ages past. I

wonder what happened to them.”

“I wish the ancient history of Oz were better chronicled,” bewailed the Queen. “I’m sure I don’t know what places these were. I must take a leave of absence and go read up Witch Glinda’s great book of records from the very start. But even that only goes back as far as 1234 O.Z...”

The pair struggled on until an hour before dawn. They did reach the vanguard of the great horde of shadow pilgrims who clustered about them but found no leader or elders or wise-men there. Such were still to seek, it appeared, for somehow it was borne in upon them that the silent multitude was in search of just such a charismatic leader. The way still led imperceptibly upward until, just as they saw the morning star, the ultimate ridge was reached.

The night’s adventure seemed to stir the young poet’s inspiration strangely. Perhaps she was getting a bit light-headed with hunger too and lack of sleep. At any rate she dropped down at last at a flat rock where there was an infinite view into the blue south and wrote these lines:

“Templed cities shone white
in cold starlight.
From the highest valley
the people looked back
at the ruins they left
on their march to the peaks.
It was a thousand generations before
when their ancestors
trod clogging mud.
They struggled upwards
and on the pinnacle
wondered where to go.
They were shown a sign
intruding among blocks
of unearthly silence.
It was a star, the largest and nearest,
shining from afar.”

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Ozma in her strapped-on traveling crown and palest green - even if sadly stained and worn drapery was looking every inch a queen as she took up the notebook and, standing, read from it, aloud.

Then most marvelous to behold: little Miss Lana turned her gaze from her sovereign and looked about. On every hand the silent pilgrims had stopped, had turned, and, far as the eye could span on that scrub-grown mountain edge, they were facing as one man toward the gentle fairy princess who had shared, nay, led their long wandering.

c h a p t e r t w e n t y - f o u r

“That’s it!” gasped Billina and flopped back in the corner of her crate, bowled over. “Oz! And Teentyweent!... I thought the name of your island was not altogether unfamiliar. Yet I knew I’d never been here myself and I couldn’t think who could have mentioned it. The Wizard!”

“‘Wizard’?” queried the island birds and rose to flap their wings, then settle on the upper slats once more.

It took Billina about half an hour (during which she became quite hungry again) to tell the oft-told tale of the Wizard of Oz. Well, of course a smattering of the story had reached the ears of the birds already, by animal hearsay, from that period when Oz natives had spent time on Tinitiwinitihumunu’ahonomua as inmates of the boarding school. But not ‘til now had the later saga of the Nine Tiny Piglets of Teentyweent been reported back to their temporary home island.

“This is tremendous,” cried Patatipiipiapaatapapita. “We ought to let the Teentyweentians know. It would relieve their minds to find out that the pigs got back safely to where they came from after all.”

“‘Let them know’?” asked the hen. “But this is marvelous. Can you speak the language of the island humans?!”

“Our civilisation is high,” again declared Patatipiipiapaatapapita, “but else not that high. No.”

“How can you ‘let them know’ then?”

“Oh, we could fly in a body into the nearby village of Liddlebiddy and attract their attention—at least enough to get them to follow us back here. When they see you they’ll be ever so excited and get you out of your prison at once. Then you can tell them!”

Billina gave a squawk of pure frustration. “I can’t speak to them—any more than you can yourselves. I’ve already been cast away once this trip for lack of being able to manage in plain Humanese...”

She trailed off in dejection. At least she had not fallen into the vulgar error of supposing that since everything on Teentyweent was wonderfully small the place was probably at least minimally magical as well and she looked for no quick solutions. But then she had an ideas “The nine Swynes! What was the language of instruction in their school?”

“Interesting you should ask that,” complimented Patatipiipiapaatapapita. “Apparently the piglets were quite clever: they *understood* Humanese but they couldn’t epeak it themselves, at least here on Teentyweent,” (‘Just my predicament,’ thought Billina) “but the headmaster had studied abroad under the famous Dr. Dolittle—and he can get along in any number of animal tongues: Feline, Canine, Avian, and of course Porcine. We sometimes have a natter with him ourselves. That’s how we pick up the odd bit of town news—”

“Could you get *him* out here?!” demanded the hen. “Then we might get somewhere.”

The birds were excited—but thoughtful too. “Tiny Town is on the other side of the island. It’ll take longer than trying to fetch the locals would. But yes! Prof. Humuu’u will be thrilled to get word of his missing pupils. We’re sure he’ll come...!”

All a-twitter, the greater part of the bird delegation rose, circled,

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and winged away toward the north.

Alas, so it turned out the tide came in again before Prof. Humuu'u could get down to the coast. It was a spring tide and the wind was offshore. When the schoolmaster reached the spot where the crate of the yellow hen had rested he saw only a shining expanse of sea-polished sand.

c h a p t e r t w e n t y - f i v e

“Sad grey light dawned
on the arid pine forest.
A line of pilgrims
toiled upwards
in the silence
with eyes fixed
on the mountain top.
Whether beggars,
haughty rulers,
or important burghers,
they aimed for discovery,
hope, and an audience
with the gifted lady
of the mountain
reputed to be in contact
with mystic existence.”

Yes, as the day broke the pilgrims pressed round Ozma's place and silently made their plans. The Queen spoke back to them, kindly, sympathetically, with consoling words which seemed to

soothe them, make their anguish fade, put them at rest, so that when the sun stood high and every shadow was gone—well, every shadow was gone.

“I never realized before that I was ‘in contact with mystic experience’, Lana,” said the girl ruler. “Thank you for pointing it out.”

“It stood to reason, didn’t it? You are the sovereign of everything in Oz and that includes not only the living.”

The queen pressed the little girl’s hand very tenderly and said, “I shall not be remiss in my duty there again.”

Thus lauded artistically Miss Peethisaw, in the bush that followed, again put pencil to paper.

“It was so quiet a leaf
fell like thunder to earth
and among the broken columns
people awoke to dawn.
Drifting with the leaves
they were the living dead:
descendants of trailblazers
discarded by progress.”

Ozma observed and approved, then she turned and cast an arm wide. “This is the last of the Gillikin country, Lana. That is all Munchkinland down there.” She indicated blue distances that from the foot of the cliffs stretched to the horizon.

Presently the two Ozites scrambled down the rook face. That warmed them up after the night’s long march but also tired them that much more. It was with gasps and groans of exhaustion and relief that they crawled into a bosky blue thicket at cliff-bottom and pulled it in after them. The blue grass beckoned like a feather bed and they slept almost before their bodies touched it.

Long on in the afternoon the couple woke. Now there was to be no gainsaying their ravenousness. But happily by now they were back ‘in civilization’ and they stood not upon the least ceremony in knocking at the first farmhouse door and stating their near-desperate need.

Of course the Munchkin family received them with every kind-

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ness, even without being told that any of their unexpected guests was the very queen of Oz herself. (Ozma with forethought hid her battered crown among her draperies.) Without actual fibbing the travelers succeeded in giving the impression that they were a lady and her niece who by unspecified means had become separated from their companions. 'More than separated,' suspected the kind housekeeper, 'more like through the mill. I've never seen two more disheveled people.' She scarcely allowed them to dawdle over the dessert before demanding that the visitors stop into the cast-iron bath while delivering over to her their garments to be scrubbed and mended.

"Oh, but that would take hours," protested the elder girl. "We cannot impose—"

The farm woman shushed her almost rudely and displayed the handsome steam iron she would presently have recourse to. "You'll never notice the time passin'," assured the hostess. "You'll be asleep."

After many days of privation two nights' worth of sleep in twenty-four hours is not more than is very welcome. When Ozma and Lana saw the vast down-stuffed baldachin bed they were to share, it struck both of them as the most delightful thing that had fallen in their way since they had left Cut-out County.

Next morning, all the difference in the world having been made, the grateful pair took leave of their hosts with many heartfelt expressions. Ozma made a mental note to send the family a year's supply of bottled ozade, once safely back in her palace. Aloud she said, "We're making for the yellow brick road. Is it far?"

Still a day's march, perhaps more, they were told. But clean, fed, rested, and presentably attired the girls thought they could face anything. In fact they turned out to have to face very little until, in the late forenoon, they heard a clattering thumping tattoo behind them and turned to see the Sawhorse rushing toward them, pulling Ozma's own red wagon, at whose reins sat the grinning little Wizard of Oz.

Such an unbelievable sight caused the queen of Oz to be completely flabbergasted.

c h a p t e r t w e n t y - s i x

Billina's only consolation, as she staved a sad and lonely farewell to Tinitiwinitihumunuo'ahonomua, was that at least, while missing meals herself, she probably wasn't going to become anyone else's. The chance of meeting gallinapophagous individuals on the open ocean was minimal. Such might well infest the waters beneath her but from these she was protected by the slat floorboards of her coop.

No, there was just boredom to look forward to, until she should meet somebody, or, more likely, some subsequent bit of ocean shore. That and hunger. She remembered all too well how famished she had grown during the three wave-tossed days between the *Klondike* and the beach at Teentyweent. Billina cocked her head and looked one-eyed down at her plump form. Well, she couldn't see that she'd lost any weight *so far*.

The trip was boring: the first two days. After that, curiously, things picked up. Billina noticed it first when she woke once from a snooze and saw that all was no longer blue about her. Part of it was white. Her crate was progressing so rapidly through the water in an easterly direction that it was casting up a ridge before

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her and leaving a white wake behind. It was, in fact, the hasty sloshing of sea water through her vessel that had wetted and wakened her.

What could the reason be? Chicken coops adrift at sea didn't *head* anywhere. They just float, wherever the winds and tides carry them. Could it be winds and tides at work now? she pondered. No, there didn't seem to be more than a normal mild breeze blowing, and not at all that easterly anyway. As for the tides, it stood to reason that the waves couldn't propel anything faster than they were going themselves.

Something was thrusting her onward and it was not just a force of nature. Coming from Oz, Billina at once thought of magic. Being in the Pacific Ocean, she at once forgot it. No magic around here. If there were, the hen might well have expected the benefit of the use of a tiny bit of it the time she had stood in the presence of an actual confessed fairy, but there hadn't been a wand in sight then or any incantation of the slightest use invoked when she was in extremis.

No, she had to look for a corporeal agent and that could only be in the waters beneath her. She cocked an eye at one of the narrow rifts in the capable carpentering that made up the floor of her cage. Was there a paler shape against the ocean dark that suddenly flashed across her sight and was gone?

For fun as well as profit she squatted down by the widest crack and trained a permanent eye on whatever might visibly move in the water below. Before more than a minute or two had passed she was certain: white waving things like arms! were passing and repassing under her cage. Sometimes she thought she saw slick pearl-grey bodies too. Then once, behind the craft, a bottle snout was briefly visible, moving at express train speed and casting the box forward before it on a wall of water.

Later Billina got the fright of her life. She had by now been rushing forward for so many hours in that unaccountable way that the first excitement had paled and she subsided into a corner for the night. Perhaps she had slept for three hours, perhaps more, when a change in the manner of her moving forward waked her.

It was like when you go to sleep to the accompaniment of some deafening noise. When the noise stops, the silence wakes you. So the hen woke now, because there was no surging up and down any longer but only a smooth forging forward, almost like the feeling of standing on the deck of a ship that makes its way over a millpond sea.

What could it be? Sharp chicken eyes served for nothing. The night was cloud dark. The visible world was invisible. All was black as a night could still be black in 1908. Nothing was hurting her though. Billina could even note with pleasure the warm dry wind, from forward propulsion, that breezed through her cage. Lulled, she fell asleep again.

It was when she woke by daylight that she got her shock. Though the sky was light grey all was still black beneath her. Billina had heard of a Black Sea but never a black ocean. Besides there were no waves on this ocean. What was more: there was no water in this ocean. She seemed to be riding on—if not dry, at least only damp—land.

A wild glance farther afield and then she saw—and fainted from the shock. She and her crate were riding serenely on the back of a vast black whale.

c h a p t e r t w e n t y - s e v e n

“Would this place do for lunch?” asked the Wizard.

Princess Ozma thought that the blue bank of the Upper Munchkin River would do better than most places and so the Wizard erected a small marquee there, using a page from Lana Peethisaw’s writing pad. He hadn’t yet acquired any great facility in creating whole pavilions out of Ozma’s pocket handkerchiefs; besides, the little queen had lost her handkerchief during the course of the awful sandstorm.

Over the celery and blue cheese Wizard Diggs offered explanations. In fact, Ozma never did completely understand the sequence of events in the rescue mission, which struck her as having followed much the same course as the old conundrum about how to get all the soldiers over the river in the rowboat with the strictly limited capacity. There was the virtually untranceportable Magic Picture, the need for a vehicle to carry passengers but the absence of a means of impelling the vehicle, the known position of some of the missing persons, and the unknown location of others.

The start of it, at least, she did grasp. “After seeing you off at

the Old North Gate I naturally followed your progress in the Magic Picture," recalled Diggs. "But after a day or so, when everything seemed to be going fairly routinely for you, I confess I grew slack. I believe more than half a day had passed without a 'tune-in' when suddenly in the dead of night I recalled my dereliction and sprang out of bed to hurry in my nightshirt to the Hall of the Picture. What was my horror when, upon asking to see you, Your Majesty, I discovered you tumbling head over heels through the air in a frightful dust storm.

"I'm afraid I panicked. I rushed back to my room and seized a box of wishing pills from the bureau drawer. Pausing only to throw around me my old zodiac cloak—which I sometimes drape over the bed as an extra spread—I swallowed a pill and wished myself into your presence—"

"I *thought* I saw wizards in the wind at one point!" broke in the little poetess, "—although the ones I noticed had long beards. You didn't happen to have thrown on a beard too, did you, Mr. Diggs?"

"Not at that point, my dear," confessed the Wizard. "Later there was no end to the dodges I had recourse to. I remember when we were trying to rescue the Scarecrow from the renewed clutches of the Flatheads.

"Chronology, Wizard, chronology," prompted Ozma as she sipped a huckleberry juice cocktail (made with a dash of sour cream, just to lighten the indigo hue). At this time she was still trying to keep track of the order of events with some precision.

"I still was not thinking in a responsible manner," Diggs continued to confess. "Otherwise, with another pill, I'd have wished us all safe home in the royal palace."

"Just as well you didn't, my friend," soothed Ozma. "Presumably at that point you knew nothing of little Lana's having joined us. She might have been left to blow about alone through that terrible night. That would have been great pity."

"Ah well," murmured the Wizard and beamed his gratitude for this sop to his conscience.

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“As it was,” he went on, “I continued to panic and merely wished *myself* safe home again, and even then the rest of my stock of pills blew away in the whirlwind.”

It took all the lunch hour to retail the saga of the still essentially student-magician’s fumbles before at last he got his show effectively on the road. There was the story of the wogglebug riding out the storm high on stratospheric thermals and then making his way on own wing-power back to the Emerald City. There was the problem of how to get the red wagon to where the Sawhorse was or else the Sawhorse to where the red wagon was. There was the mission to rescue the Scarecrow from Flat-head Mountain (easily recognizable by Professor Wogglebug from what he saw of it in the Picture). All through, the Wizard was keeping tabs on his queen — and her unexpected new companion — but though he could see her clearly enough and wept to witness her trials and discomforts he couldn’t make out her whereabouts more exactly than that she was somewhere in the purple country.

When at last the original team of explorers (though minus all its female participants) had been brought to safety and O.Z. Diggs had bethought him to avail himself of his patented where-is-scope, it was a matter of less than a day to get on the trail of the errant ladies and track them to the banks of the Munchkin River.

“Tell me, Wizard,” said Ozma, drawing a line under all those confusions, “in your comings and goings in and around the palace did you happen to see anything of Billina the yellow hen? I sent her on a mission but much to my surprise I’ve heard nothing from her.”

“Why, no, your grace, I’m sorry —”

“Or of any unusual influx of fairies? Specifically in fact, Lulea, queen of them all?”

“Had I but done that, your highness, I would have lost no time in beseeching her aid in this tangle.”

“Mmm, I thought as much. Well then, no more but this; let us make all possible haste back to the Emerald City. If Billina cannot bring the fairy queen I must have recourse to other means.”

“Oh, er, Your Grace,” mumbled the wizard, once more embarrassed. “Would three extra hours—say four—put out your plans unconscionably?”

Ozma smiled. “Now that you mention it I suppose time really doesn’t matter that much. I have urgent tasks in hand but I don’t know that speed will help. Rather diplomacy—and detective work. What is it you have in mind?”

“You know the nine tiny piglets?”

“Of which one belongs to me? How could I forget them?”

“I’ve always meant to seek out their parents and reassure them that the pigs are alive and well and living in the Emerald City. Now that, at last, we’re so close it seems a shame to miss the opportunity.”

“Close? Do the pigs’ parents live around here? In Oz!? I always thought...” Ozma’s voice trailed away in the effort to recall.

“That they came from the island of Teentyweent? That’s what the sailor said from whom I bought them. You can imagine my amazement when, after the ten of us reached Oz and the piglets found their voices, I heard from their own lips that they were natives of this country after all.”

“How quite incredible,” breathed the girl ruler and feared that she was in for another tale of wanderings and coincidences that was going to tax her powers of belief. She didn’t ask for details but simply said, “I hope the pigs have been back to visit their family,” and looked quite stern for her.

“Oh, yes!” Diggs hastened to reassure. “Even your favorite, Pigmy, times when he’s been away to participate in table tennis tournaments, has extended his absence to cover a night with the old folks. Only alas...”

“Yes?” pursued the princess.

“I’m sorry to say I myself have never taken the occasion to come way off here to this outpost of the country to pay my respects.”

“I understand, O.Z. Say no more. We shall be pleased to lend our presence to a state call on—”

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“The Swynes. Professor Grunter Swyne and Mrs. Squealina Swyne.”

c h a p t e r t w e n t y - e i g h t

The fairy hummingbirds completed their circuit of the Hawaiian island by a visit to the Barking Sands. These were a stretch of coastal earth that had the odd property of giving off a squeaking or “barking” noise when you trod on it. As hummingbirds Mme. Fay’s followers couldn’t tread to any great extent, nor were they much more convincing as treaders in the shape of gossamer fairies. Hence, just for half an hour they turned themselves into elephants and rhinoceri. Then there was treading enough and to spare. Oh, how those sands barked. They’d never barked so much before, because the incidence of elephants in Hawaii is virtually nil.

Just before the local Kanakas got out spears and blow-darts with which to confront the unusual animals the whole fairy band switched back to hummingbirds and returned to Honolulu.

By now they felt they’d fairly done the Sandwich Islands, where after all they had been for more than a fortnight. One and another of the fays had expressed a desire to see how things were going on in the Forest of Burzee. Secretary Feebimble was, in addition, feeling some concern about the whereabouts of the three sisters

who had missed the boat, or rather the train, at Stockholm. These had ultimately got in touch with their queen via telepathy, helped out significantly by recourse to their two-way wrist radios. (The powerful queen fairy, expert in the use of the globes and adept at manipulating light, dark, and anti-matter, had naturally been among the first to avail herself of, and improve upon, the techniques of wireless, once the rudiments of these had been worked out.)

The three truants had ended up in the oddest places. One had found herself on a bleak shelf of rock near Tristan da Cunha. Bored with the exclusive companionship of albatrosses, rook-hopper penguins, and inaccessible island raffle, she had early signaled her intention to return to Burzee, there to await the eventual return of her sisters. Another was having the time of her life playing the roulette tables at Macao. And as we know, poor Petalutha had hung around Penn Station for days in vain before finally taking a cheap walk-up flat in the Bowery, where she expiated in pointless poverty her silliness in mistaking directions on her first setting out.

It was the latter whom queen Fay, when she had been reminded of the case by her devoted secretary, now intended to look up and gently detach from durance more or less vile. There was no great hurry. "Je m'amuse merveilleusement!" she exclaimed, lapsing into French for no obvious reason, and went on to explain that she was having such a good time that she wanted to spin out the days in the Pacific, while yet conceding that she and her supporters might begin to trend in the general direction of New York.

That's how they happened to be down at the docks on 22 June, looking at the posted notices of arriving and departing vessels. What a lot of famous names! though, to be sure, perhaps not one of these ships was the celebrated *original* bearer of any given appellative. They remarked the *Ark*, the *Dove*, the *Savannah*, the *Mary Rose*, the *Great Eastern*, the *Mayflower*, the *Niña*, the *Pinta*, the *Santa Maria*, the *Victory*, the *Half Moon*, and the *Mary Celeste*, but the listing that struck all fairy eyes, except just those of the Queen, was "*Lurline (II) (maiden voyage)*"

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"Hm," said Fay, when her attention had subtly been drawn, "'maiden voyage.' *that* one ought to be up to date and comfortable enough. 'Passengers and freight. Accommodation for fifty-seven.' That's not very many, is it? We'd take up more than half the places ourselves, if we went normal-human-size, and I suppose we must, under the circumstances."

"What if we went as crew?" suggested Calabash.

"'Crew'?" said Mme. McQueen, turning in surprise. "In what capacity?"

"As musicians," replied the musical fairy.

"But, darling, we none of us play, except the virginals of course—and except yourself," the queen added, vaguely recalling that *somebody* had used to perform as one-woman band on harp, flute, and tuba in the old days when the fairies would dance madly by moonlight in Burzee.

"But don't you see? they could learn!" cried Calabash, now all fire and flame. "By a wave of your wand you can propagate my knowledge of threnody in the brains of all. Finger facility will follow along as a matter of course."

"Well, we'll see," allowed the queen. "If there's not room for all twenty-eight of us among the passengers, it might be an idea."

As it turned out, the fairy horde were dispersed about equally among passengers and crew. The end portion of *Lurline's* maiden run WAS popular with customers so there were only about a dozen free berths left when the fairies presented themselves at the ticket office. On the other hand, *Matson Navigation* scarcely needed twenty-eight musicians to entertain forty-two passengers.

With their instruments (hastily recruited from pawn shops) stowed behind the curtain in the salon, the fairies went on deck. There was undeniably an air of fiesta about the lei-draped ladies and the gentlemen in yachting jackets and white ducks who clustered along the quayside rail of the ship. A hula band was playing *Aloha Oe* on the deck and paper streamers were thrown. A thunderous hooting split the air and the engines began to throb.

The fairies, most of them, succeeded in insinuating themselves among the other passengers along the rail. For the time being no

one knew which of them were travelers and which were crew. There was a great deal of merry noise and yet not so loud but what Butterfly presently left her hard-struggled-to position of vantage and went to squeeze in beside queen Fay a little further along the line.

“Yo’ Highness?... ‘Scuse me but would yo’ lean out a mite? See dere, ‘long to de lef’? dem two gals in white? It’s a mahty cu’yus ting but ah heard ‘em talkin’ — and yo’ know what day was talkin’ ‘bout?... Oz!”

c h a p t e r t w e n t y - n i n e

Princess Ozma was not as irresponsible in the face of contending crises as might appear, when she accepted an invitation to pay a social call instead of dashing home to attend to business. The first thing she did when there came a lull in the Wizard’s continued bout of reminiscing was to borrow his crystal set and put in a call to Glinda, great and good — and powerful — Sorceress of the South and ruler of the Quadlings.

“Glinda dear? Ozma here. I’ve got into rather a mix-up. I went off pretty impromptu to have a look at the Winkie-Gillikin border. Were you alert to the fact that up north Winkieland occupies a sixth of what one would have expected to be all Gillikin territory? that is, along the northern desert border of Oz.”

“It’s been like that for ages, dear,” confirmed the sorceress. “Has it got worse?”

“I should say so, yes,” stated the fairy ruler ruefully, “on the evidence of the dust storm I’ve just been through.”

“I’m afraid those happen quite frequently,” said the good witch. “I rather tend by now to skip the descriptions of them in the Record Book.”

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"Well, they're pretty bad," insisted Ozma, "and I for one don't think they ought to be allowed to go on—"

"It may not last, Ozma," asserted the southern sorceress. "I have reason to believe we may be nearing the end of the Winkie proliferation cycle—"

"Whatever do you mean?" Ozma, still a neophyte ruler, didn't know *ALL* the ins and outs of Oz cosmogony.

"In my researches I've come across tantalizing hints of a process that may have been going on for millenia: actually back beyond Goorikop's intervention in Oz affairs—not to mention those of Lurline-that-was."

"Hm," said the Oz queen speculatively. "Lurline—or Lulea as she's been calling herself for some time: she's what I was signaling you about. But go on—with your—er, explication."

"The Oz colors," said Glinda a trifle unexpectedly. "You know what they represent, of course."

"Well—or." The girl ruler had to confess herself somewhat stumped. Her reading hadn't progressed that far if indeed the Royal Library she had inherited contained any volumes on the topic at all. "Aren't they just arbitrary? Whatever popped into Mr. Baum's head when he had to fill out the background of the sketchy story that Miss Dorothy retailed to him?"

"Oh, gracious, no," laughed the sorceress. "The colors are what they are, if not for a purpose, anyway with a signification. You do appreciate that your four kingdoms represent the traditional elements of earth, air, fire, and water?"

"Yes, of course." Ozma bridled a little over the wireless.

"Well, the Munchkin country, water-richest of the lands, is naturally blue—"

"I see. And you all are red down your way because of 'fire'... And that's why you've got so many volcanoes too." Ozma was no dummy.

"Exactly," the witch concurred. "Winkie yellow represents earth—"

"Odd. I'd have thought brown."

"Quite so. Although we tend to think of brown as a separate

distinct color it's really no more than very dark yellow. That's why there's no brown in the rainbow which is made up of cardinal hues in their purest manifestation. And of course the Oz colors would be in their 'cardinal' form."

"Hm—and Gillikin purple then?" wondered the Oz princess.

"'Air', of course. But since air is colorless it's a little hard to symbolise in a hue. However, because air, at least in terms of life, is the noblest of the 'elements' (be the others what they may, life couldn't exist without air), no doubt it is fitting that it should be represented by the noblest color. Hence too, the mountains, of course, as the emblematic geographical feature of the land: 'purple mountains' majesty' reaching to the airy heights..."

"All very neat," said Ozma. "I'm persuaded. Do go on."

"Apparently there's more to it," related Glinda. "I'm coming to the conclusion that there are geological epochs when these topographical features go a bit on the rampage, and in a clockwise direction, for some reason. Among the earliest traditions is that of a great flood, or floods. That would be the Munchkin element in operation. Then, right within the historical era, there were long-drawn-out periods of volcanic activity, centered here in the south. How long the Winkie 'earth' expansion phase has been going on I've no idea but perhaps right from the end of the volcanic epoch."

"Oh, dear," commented the girl ruler. "That all sounds a bit bigger even than I feared. I can't do anything about it of course, but I had some idea that Queen Lulea, once the case was put to her, could manage to put a damper on those winds, which appear to be the vehicle of the unfortunate phenomenon. But if this is all part of something cosmic..."

"Don't underestimate Lulea's competence," warned the witch. "She's only a woman, of course—if non-human creatures can be termed 'women'—or 'men'—"

Ozma broke in with some (ladylike) indignation: "I'm an immortal myself and yet I also think of myself as a woman ...or girl."

"All right! Let's say 'woman.' Furthermore the good Lulea can also behave a bit scattily at times. However, we must give the

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fairy her dues.. her power is greater than that of mere deities (often male) who identify with human beings and also occasionally work miracles. *Everything* a fairy does is a miracle and though these acts may often be limited to trivia, like wish-granting and personality transformations, when the chips are down the capabilities of a really top-rank fairy can be characterised as cosmic, indeed."

"That's good to know," declared Ozma earnestly. "You've relieved my mind enormously, Glinda. Thanks so much. But I'm afraid I'm still a bit: uneasy. You see, I sent Billina off—you remember Dorothy's yellow chicken—to try to alert the great Lulea. It's been days now! I'm badly worried that something may have happened to Billina herself..."

"Put your mind at rest, dear," comforted the charitable Good Witch of the South. "I'll be onto it this minute! with a general alert to fairies of land, sea, and air to watch over the bird wherever she may be."

“Fantastic,” said Mme. McQueen and looked at the two nautically dressed teen-agars along the rail. “Talking about Oz, you say?”

“Dey sho’ is,” assured Butterfly.

“What’s so surprisssing about that?” put in Ereol, who liked to think of herself as chief fairy (after their queen herself and always tried to stay near her leader as being her second-in-command. She had overheard the whole exchange. “It’s well known that the Ozzz books by now are famous evvverywhere, especially in America. Every well-read young girl would know of them, and those two look quite intelligent. I expect they’re their favorite books.” She fingered her spirit (which for the moment subsisted in a couple of blue and yellow marbles) confidently.

But Butterfly came right back. “Yo’ nevah heard wut dey was sayin’! One o’ dam gals talk lak she done *been* in Oz.”

“Fascinating,” agreed the Queen. “Which one?”

“Dat one wid de yellor ha’uh,” Butterfly pinpointed.

At this moment the *Lurline* at last began to edge away from the quayside and the attention of the three fairies was distracted

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toward the crowd on shore, whose cries of farewell increased in volume and excitement. When they looked again, the two mortal girls, objects of their attention, had disappeared.

But Queen Fay's curiosity had been piqued. She kept the teenage pair in mind—and in sight, whenever one or the other or both would appear on the deck or in the gangways of the *LURLINE*. The second day out, while at dinner—if not actually *AT*, still very near, the captain's table—the fairy sent a note to Calabash leading the all-girl orchestra. The note requested her follower to direct the players in a tune of the Burzee queen's choosing. Then Mme. McQueen leaned back and kept a watchful eye out.

At the captain's table two girls were toying with their charlottes russes. A person always ate too much aboard ship and by the time they got to their dessert they had almost lost interest. Talk had dwindled too and when the music struck up a livelier tempo one of the girls began to hum along with it. "What fun," she broke off. "That's one of my favorites."

"Oh? What is it?"

"That's the funny part. I can't think of the name of it. Wait a minute—" The girl began to follow the tune with words:

"Come on and dance it! We're doin' a new step!

It really is new. It's a fresh-as-the-dew step.

A lively one too. It's no sticky old glue step.

And it's not a fake. It's an honest and true step.

Everyone loves its no pride-of-the-few step.

Christians and Moslems and many a Jew step.

The animals dance it and call it the 'Zoo Step'—

"Oh, how queer!" gasped the girl with the yellow hair and sang on as if bewitched:

"It's the yellow and purple and red, green, and blue step.

Well, what do they call it?! Why, that's the Oz Two-Step!"

Dorothy stopped as the orchestra went into a da capo at an even more frenzied pace. She leaned forward and stared at the leader with big eyes. How in the world—?

"What is it?" said Lurline excitedly.

"That song—or dance, really. How on earth could this band

know it? I last heard it at Ozma's reception at the Emerald City last summer. The Nine Tiny Piglets performed it, each one singing a line. It was the big hit of the season. But an Oz tune couldn't possibly be known to musicians here."

Miss Matson was equally impressed. After all the weeks, going on years, of talk the two had had about the Land of Oz and whether it existed (Lurline's constant question) and yes, it did! (Dorothy's always answer), this was the first time anything had happened that incontrovertibly tended to prove there really was a place called 'Oz.' Dorothy had demonstrably known the words of a song that the San Franciscan herself had certainly never heard. This was something that could be investigated.

Lurline got to her feet, crossed the floor to the bandstand, and waited 'til the last rousing note of the Two-Step blared out. Nothing daunted (as daughter of the owner of the line) but agreeably courteous (as became a well-bred young lady), she plucked the leader by the sleeve.

The girl made a lively pantomime of silent clapping, then gushed: "I *love* that tune! I couldn't stop dancing—my feet, that is, under the table there. Tell met has it got words? It's brand new to me."

Calabash was charmed but also, appropriately, somewhat abashed. Mme. McQueen had not been at all specific about how far she, Calabash, could go in presenting an artifact unmistakably Ozian. But after all, what could the words to a popular tune hurt? "Thanks so much! Well, actually there *is* a lyric. I'll have one of the girls render it for you."

"Oh, would you?! How smashing! By the way, what's your name? On the menu it only says 'Haunting strains of the Fairy Pipers'."

"Calabash," informed the band leader. "Er Cab Calabash," she improvised, aware that both a first and a second name were standard in the world she temporarily occupied. "And that's Dolly Dreamsweet who's going to sing for you now."

Without appearing to, Lurline, back at the table, over the nuts, listened carefully to hear if Oz and (what even she by now knew

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were the Oz colors would also be mentioned by a musician in the employ of the Matson Navigation Company. That would prove that Oz existed at any rate somewhere besides in the imagination of Dorothy Gale and, evidentially, the Reilly and Britton Company.

"...the red, green, and blue step'," sang Dreamsweet. That tore it. The cloud of doubt burst and conviction rained down on the mind of Lurline Matson. Oz was real! And what's more, these musicians were *from* Oz. Suddenly she knew it in her bones!

"Dorothy!" she hissed low. "Do you know those people?"

"Who?" The Kansas girl was still lost in a reverie of speculation.

"The band! The girls that are playing. Look close!"

"I've been looking. But no, not a face seems familiar. How come?"

"Well, you know everybody in Oz. It just occurred to me these people might be...er, Ozites."

"Then you do believe, Lurl?! At last!! Oh, I'm so glad! But no, actually I've never seen any of them before. And besides! I *don't* know everybody in Oz."

"Don't look now, but what about that woman at the next table? She seems to be pretty thick with the band leader."

Dorothy peered, unobtrusively. But the frequent Oz visitor had never had the pleasure of meeting queen Lulea in Oz, though of course over and anon hearing tales of the fairy's exploits through her great chum, the regnant Princess of Oz.

"I think there's more here than meets the eye," declared Miss Matson with pondus. "I'm going to do some detective work."

c h a p t e r t h i r t y - o n e

Relieved, Princess Ozma shook the reins gaily, determined to force herself to have fun. Billina could almost surely be counted on to be safe, and otherwise nothing was pressing too awfully on the Girl Ruler's conscience. Here in the heart of Munchkinland it was easy to forget the extent to which great forces of nature were conspiring to make Winkieland take over Gillikinland.

"Mr. Wizard," said Lana Peethisaw, as the blue breeze whipped her curls, "will you tell me about the pigs?"

"To be sure, my dear," said O.Z. Diggs, taking it easy on the back seat beside the little girl. "You're fond of pigs?"

"Well, animals in general," confessed the girl. "I never had any of my own. I'm partial to hippopotami—but it was considered inconvenient to have any at home."

"And pigs are related to hippos," fell in the Wizard genially. "I see the connection."

Which was more than Lana did. To cover her confusion she said, "I've written about hippopotami—"

"Do tell us, Lana!" said Ozma enthusiastically. She was overhearing attentively as she guided the Sawhorse along the yellow

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brick road.

The poetess obliged.

“I may be an ignoramus
But I know a hippopotamus
When I see one,’

Said the little girl in blue.

‘Oh, you will forgive me, darling,’

Said her teacher (fearing quarreling)

‘But your stress scheme

In that word will never do,

For the accent falls on ‘-POTam-’

And it really is the bottom—

Not to say “the pits!”—

To emphasise the “A”.’

‘My apologies, dear teacher,’

Said the darling little creature,

‘But I only said

I know how hippos *look*.

How they sound’s another matter

And I’ve never heard one natter

And I haven’t looked them up

In any book.

For the nonce I’ll stress the “-pot-” and

Wait until a hippo’s got an

Opportunity

Himself to have a say.’

‘Charming child!’ approved Miss Wilcox

As she fumbled with her pill box—”

Lana seemed going on indefinitely in her recitation, when Ozma, perhaps feeling that the little girl had delighted them long enough, broke in to say, “What’s that up there a head?”

The others dutifully peered forward along the road but could discern nothing out of the way. But the princess had spoken literally; with a gay laugh she now pointed upward with her whip, saying, “There!” and indicating the tops of a stand of blue-gum trees with which they had now drawn level.

It WAS a head. Over the highest tufts of the trees they could just make out a pointed face that looked down at them quizzically as it rotated its jaws in chewing fashion.

Ozma pulled on the reins. The Sawhorse didn't actually need such physical constraint (not to mention the use of the whip!). His dear ruler need only have said "Stop" and it would have sufficed. Everybody, horse and people alike, was interested in looking further into the matter of the head above the trees.

"Hi!" called a jaunty voice.

"Exactly," Ozma called back. "You're the highest thing we've seen all day. Do you live up there?"

"Oh, no, only my head is in the clouds. I've got my feet on the ground."

With that the head disappeared down behind the dark blue leaves and a moment later they heard a drumming sound and a fine young giraffe cantered into view. At least, it moved quickly in typical undulating giraffe fashion but with a stiffness, a gawkiness, in its stride that was unusual. It gave the wise-becoming young ruler of Oz an idea and when the animal had drawn near she said, "Have you been here long?"

The giraffe stopped short and a blank (but always cheerful) look spread over its face. "Funny you should ask that," it called down. "I *haven't* been here very long, and I don't know how—" A sudden expression of grief, almost of horror, filled up the blankness on its face. The tall creature made a couple of tentative moves with a right front leg and a left rear one. Then a big tear leaked down its face. But again abruptly, "Never mind," it said. "I'm here now. Then I saw those gum leaves and I thought I'd have a taste..."

The giraffe's voice trailed off. "You know what?" it said with renewed brightness. "I never talked before either! I wonder..."

"Don't trouble about that now," advised the fairy princess. "Later you'll want to think it all over quietly. But for now, will you tell us your name?"

"They called me 'Gerry' at the zoo," stated the animal. "The last thing I remember was some people saying, 'Oh, Gerry'—" Suddenly, "Who's that?" he asked and without standing on

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ceremony lowered his head to the level of Lana Peethisaw's hat brim. (In 1908 it was unheard of to go outdoors without a hat—or at least a crown—on, so the kindly farm family had outfitted both girls with headgear. Gently the giraffe's long velvet lips lifted the hat off Lana's head so that he could get a look at the face underneath.

Lana shrieked with delight and instantly transferred her preference from short fat animals to a tall gangly one. "Ooh," she crooned and something made her compose furiously for a moment.

"I saw a giraffe
And I wanted to laugh,
But I couldn't, you see.
Something stuck
In my throat when I tried
And I very near cried
And my feelings at once
Ran amuck.
That giraffe grabbed my hat
And the moment that that
Occurred something inside
Me went 'click!'
Now I stand and adore
And I'm hoping for more:
To be friends and to
—never be sick..."

the poet concluded somewhat unexpectedly.

"'Sick', Miss P.?" asked the Wizard, but the giraffe had lifted the hat high and was mumbling it with soft lips, juggling it so it stood on end, and seeming to plan to eat it. But this was illusion; it never used its teeth. If it had, Lana's blond straw with the blue ribbon would have been shreds in seconds. Instead, Gerry lowered the hat gently and dropped it on the little girl's head again.

The Wizard's question got lost in the shuffle but Ozma knew.

c h a p t e r t h i r t y - t w o

Further friendships were being forged about the same time. Dorothy Gale became great chums with band-leader Calabash and secretary Feebimble and "second in command" Ereol. She seemed to have an affinity for those close to a throne, as she liked to feel she was, herself. Lurline Matson (without even realising it) went right for the one *on* the throne, and perhaps that was the attraction of likes as well.

It began with the captain's daughter unobtrusively keeping an eye out for the (as she was to learn) fairy queen's appearances on deck. The latter was always accompanied by a bevy of attractive girls. The Californian had found out from the purser that the ladies were traveling together and were the manager, staff, and star pupils of a secretarial school. The leader was a Mrs. McQueen.

Though Lurline had more than once observed the directress looking in her direction with a questioning and friendly eye the woman was never alone and the California girl, though usually so forthright, somehow hesitated to push through the crowd merely to drop an obviously conversation-starting remark.

The weather solved her problem for her. The first days out of

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Honolulu had been placid but during the fifth night the seas got up. The heiress awoke dismayed to find her cabin (shared with Dorothy) going up and down in an unsettling manner. However, she supposed she'd found her sea legs and she managed to make her way to the dining saloon with her chum. There she had to say "No, thank you," to almost everything the waiter suggested and remained picking at a grapefruit. But when she saw the big stack of pancakes with syrup and melted butter that Dorothy proposed to eat (against a background of swaying chandeliers) she abruptly excused herself and made her way on deck.

The wind wrapped her skirts about her legs and tossed her auburn locks in every direction as she studied the whitecaps intently. Then she heard a throaty voice beside her.

"Feeling the waves?"

Lurline looked and groaned. The fascinating woman from A deck! and herself in this deeply embarrassing position. She had thought she couldn't feel worse but she did.

"Perhaps a little Coué will help?" said the woman and laid a cool left hand on Miss Matson's brow. The suffering girl didn't see her pluck from her luxuriant, though wind-blown, coiffure a long pencil and gesture peremptorily with it. All she knew was that suddenly she had never felt better!

Lurline nearly staggered with the relief. She leaned against the rail and turned and looked at her deliverer marveling. "Is that Coué?!" she said.

"A form of it," said ex-Lulea, fibbing slightly.

"Whatever it is, it's magic!" declared the girl, and she was certainly right there.

Well, that was the beginning of the great friendship. The two descended to the little dining hall together, where Mrs. McQueen's staff were buzzing agitatedly over her having given them the slip that way. The fairy queen brooked no nonsense. She made her way majestically to the Captain's table, whither Lurline Matson had invited her. There was room. The captain wasn't there. He was ruling the waves on the bridge.

Lurline ordered a stack of hot cakes bigger than Dorothy's had

been, *and* some greasy sausages. Miss Gale marveled, but smiled, to see her friend so confidently restored. She too was interested in meeting the beautiful lady from the other table. Up to now, however, she had no particular reason to connect Mme. McQueen with her orchestra friends (all of whom had proved very coy about admitting any personal connection with Oz).

What was her astonishment then, after names had been exchanged (some form of these were already known to all from the pursuer's records), when, on an enquiry after home towns, the business college proprietress calmly stated that she was from a place called "Burzee."

Dorothy nearly dropped the loquat she was having for dessert. "Pardon me!" she gasped. "Would that be 'the Forest of—?!'"

"Why, yes," said ex-Lulea. "Don't let it get about," she whispered, "but my girls and I are traveling in disguise! We do stay, normally, in the Forest of Burzee. Not L.A., as was stated to the ticket agents."

Connections were made abruptly in the Kansas girl's mind (while Lurline listened fascinatedly, although eating). "So you and the orchestra ladies..."

"Yes. All one," admitted Madame, without, at the moment, giving further details.

"Oh! Good gracious sake," cried Dorothy. "You're the Queen of the Fairies!!" She had stopped eating completely.

Ex-Lulea nodded complacently. "I know I can trust you girls to keep our secret. You see, I know that you believe. What's more, I know you know the magic continent yourself. That's why I've been so very curious to meet you. I can't conceal my fascination. How...?"

"Why, I'm Dorothy Gale!" declared Dorothy Gale.

"Yes, I caught your name," assured the fairy. "But what I was wondering was how you came to know about Burzee personally."

Dorothy blushed. Apparently she was not so famous as she thought she was. How humbling to have to say, "Well, you see, a tornado blew away the house I was in and accidentally killed a

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witch in the fairyland of Oz—”

Mme. McQueen, contrite, laid an earnest hand on Dorothy's. “*Forgive* me, my dear. So you're *that* Dorothy Gale?!... I have an awful memory for names. For instance, at the moment I can't remember what my own name is—”

“Why, ‘Mrs. Fay McQueen’,” suggested Lurline, getting in a word.

“No, we only thought that up the week before last. No!—” she turned to Dorothy again urgently, resqueezing her hands “if you recall the name of the Queen of the Fairies, don't tell me! It turns out that I'm in a fugue from that name. I don't care to remember whatever it was it would remind me of. I shall presently be taking a new name, but for the moment my traveling alias, ‘McQueen,’ will do.”

Well, they remained talking Oz for ages, until the busboy absolutely insisted he had to clear the table. Then they went on deck. Happily the high wind had leveled off and the sea was now no more than averagely choppy. The three girl-ladies stood right up at the prow gazing out to sea but really seeing nothing, because in their minds' eyes the scene was filled with emerald towers, as they talked about the most fascinating topic in the world: Oz.

And yet they were not *totally* absorbed, for one of them, Queen Lulea-that-was, suddenly stopped in mid-word and exclaimed: “Now this is really too marvelous.” (She was being a little bit disingenuous, for it was in fact partly the result of her own spells that what was about to happen was about to happen. “Do my eyes deceive me? Or is that a chicken crate I see bobbing on the waters down there?”

It *was* a chicken crate.

c h a p t e r t h i r t y - t h r e e

Gerry Giraffe elected to amble along beside the red wagon of those who were going to visit the Swyne family. He wasn't going anywhere else—had no travel plans at all; in fact, no plans period. As far as he could make out he was in a setting where he had never been before. That was already travel enough and it left him completely disoriented. The only plan he could even imagine was possibly trying to get back to the little outdoor zoo at Paignton, Devonshire, and somehow the idea of that filled him with distaste, although already he could hardly have told you why.

As for Lana Peethisaw, she certainly didn't intend to be parted from the person she had already become fondest of, this side of the Shifting Sands. Oh, she had a great fondness for Queen Ozma and much esteem for the Wizard, O.Z. Diggs, and even the obliging taciturn Sawhorse. But she loved Gerry Giraffe. Funny how the heart is. Grab somebody's hat with your lips and you may find out.

Ozma conceded at once when Lana wanted to invite the giraffe along. There was of course no question of the little girl's clinging on her favorite's back and riding along that way. Giraffes

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are your non-beast-of-burden *par excellence*. There's no level place to sit or to deposit loads. There's nothing to hold onto without awful straining upward. The undulating canter is guaranteed to shake off anything that may have lodged on the giraffe's back. So Gerry just ambled along beside the red wagon. Now and then he lowered his head to the others' level to let know that he was still there any who might have missed the beautiful long rose-patterned legs (with that curious stiffness) that moved beside the carriage.

Thrown back on her own devices, the Winkie girl reverted to her former question to the Wizard; would he tell her something about the pigs they were going to visit?

"It all began—" reminisced the amiable old man, "as far as I became concerned—when I was operating the old shell game at a midway in Los Angeles." He broke off to explain for neophyte Lana and the Queen of Oz, for that matter—what a shell game was. That in turn made it necessary to explain why anyone of such probity as the Wonderful Wizard of Oz should have been engaged in any business as dubious as that. Mr. Diggs gallantly made light of the distresses he had suffered since his creaky old balloon, returning from Oz, had gone down in a swamp in Manitoba, and of the number of meals he had missed until he gravitated back into circus life in the United States.

"It was the disappearance aspect of the shell game that fascinated me," he explained, "not the hoodwinking—or, if you will, cheating—of my customers. The penny was always there, under one of the shells, if they could but have divined which one. But I loved being able to mystify them, and I grew clever at it. Apparently the public liked it too because they always came back for more. I began to branch out. Hiding coins and nuts about my person became too easy. I took to concealing doves, and even a mangy rabbit, about other persons' persons and then drawing them forth, to general amazement and acclaim.

"One day at the shell table a drunken sailor approached me. He had, he said, a number of pigs for sale.

"'Pigs?'" I said. 'But I'm not in the pork business.'

“‘No-o,’ he admitted blearily. But these were pigs with a difference. They were *that* small! And indeed, when he brought them forth from his kit bag, they were of a diminutiveness! I saw at once they would be perfect for my act. But could I afford them? Pigs of that rarity ought to be in a zoo, if not a museum.

“I affected indifference but deigned to listen to what price he was asking for them. Five dollars a pig! It was a fantastic buy. But I must not appear too eager. He began to sell. They were his mother’s pigs, he explained, and he loved them dearly every one. ‘But, see yet’ he blurred further, ‘I ain’t et all day.’ He made no such claim about drinking. He was on his beam-ends, he mourned, and was down to his last nine pigs. Would I have a heart?

“I made sure I had all nine swine in a hamper I happened to have by me before I handed over fifty dollars, five extra to seal the deal. ‘Where did you get them?’ I demanded coldly.

“‘Off the islan’ of Teen’yweent,’ he explained, no more remembering the mother than I had believed in her.

“‘Where might that be?’ I wanted to know.

“‘In the Pacific — this side o’ the San’wickees. It’s an islan’ where everything is liddle-biddy. Why, even the hours are no bigger’n a minute!’

“I took this last for a sickly essay at humor. I was not inclined to tarry in the fellow’s company. But first I made some show of trying to establish the legality of the transaction. ‘The pigs are—were!—your own property?’ I insisted.

“‘Oh, absolutely, yur honor!’

“No doubt I let myself be too easily reassured. But I was wild, don’t you know, to possess so ideal an adjunct to my carnival act. The pigs proved admirably teachable. I could not doubt their intelligence and I had every day proofs of their tractability. The illusion we practised: of my being able to part one pig into two, grew steadily in convincingness.

“I should have been content with the *renommée* I was gaining as a reliable prestidigitator.

“But no. In talk with the carnival proprietor I let slip that I had once piloted a balloon. The next thing I knew he had bought out

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of mothballs a tatty old gas bag left over from the St. Louis world's fair, and there I was; aloft again, advertising in the sky.

"The rest you know. I presently came down in the land of the Mangaboos and Dorothy Gale and I reached Oz, I never to return to the land of my birth."

"No, indeed, O.Z.," confirmed Princess Ozma from the driver's seat, "...unless one day you should *choose* to return there—but only for a visit."

They all sat on for a moment in a glow of good feeling. But after all that wasn't quite all. Lana still didn't get the connection with the Swyne couple and the Wizard had to continue explaining.

"Of course we hadn't been in Oz any time at all when the pigs woke up to where we were. They'd got their voices, for one thing—for purposes other than squealing and grunting. They announced that this was the land of *their* birth and spoke of how pleased they were to be back. On their first free weekend some or all of them wanted to be off to pay a courtesy call on their parents. They did so, I'm happy to say. Unfortunately I was unable to get away to accompany them and the omission has preyed on my mind to some degree ever since. I'm extremely grateful for the opportunity..." the Wizard trailed off, feeling he should make a big deal of it, but Ozma waved her whip dismissively.

"Such a strange coincidence," mused little Miss Peethisaw. "The piglets are famous in certain circles as coming from the island of Teentyweent, and yet they're also native Ozites and their parents live here. It hardly seems possible to co-ordinate the two sets of data."

"It hasn't been easy!" confirmed the Wizard. "A lot of it is still unclear to me. Frankly, I'm hoping to hear more of the story in a few minutes when we reach the Swynes'. But as I can learn..."

Then Diggs recapped for the little girl what the nine tiny piglets themselves had told him: of their being sent abroad when very young to be educated and of the old happy days in Tiny Town and of the sailor who had altered their fate and of so many mysteries of time and aging and of the mind, and of the strange

ultimate dream of Blue Hawaii. “It is the piglets’ great hope one day to see Teentyweent again.”[§]

“Do you think they will ever find it?” she asked.

c h a p t e r t h i r t y - f o u r

There was frantic activity aboard *Lurline II*.

After her initial pose of cool casualness Fay McQueen virtually shrieked: “We must stop the ship!” At the same time she jerked her pencil wand from her hair-do and made a rapid pass with it, regardless of consequences. Far away in the bowels of the ship the engines choked and died.

Dorothy and Lurline stared. What in the world? They wondered, but they were prevented from wondering long by their new friend’s throwing herself, figuratively if not literally, on her knees in front of Capt. Matson’s daughter and pleading, “Miss Lurline! Could you? *Would* you use your influence to get the captain to turn the ship around or or put out a boat, or something—and pick up that chicken coop!”

Lurline was alarmed and stuck her head over the side to catch a last glimpse of the floating box before it disappeared toward the stern of the ship. “*That* coop? But what—! Yes, of course, Mme. McQueen, if you say so. But what excuse can I give?” she jabbered as the two females set off at a run for the bridge, Dorothy

[§] See THE work TINY PIGLETS OF OZ. Editor’s note.

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Gale trailing behind and a cortège of fairy stenographers following her.

Captain Conrad was much mystified at his employer's young daughter's urgent request but he gave the necessary command. As it happened, there was a call from the engine room at the same time, reporting unexpected malfunctioning of the brand new engines. A temporary halt to perform a small overhaul would not be amiss. Of course with the engines gone, the halt was inevitable anyway so why not concede gracefully? After all, Miss Matson was a sensible young woman who would not interfere with seamanship for a whim. Besides—he gave a last sop to his sense of duty—the ship was named for her.

Propulsionless, there could be no question of turning the vessel about but a boat was lowered, manned by those seamen surest of their legs in a pitching sea, and in more time than it takes to tell they rowed back the quarter mile to where a nondescript slatted box lurched up and down on the billows.

A crowd of women—girls, really—waited agog at the side of the *Lurline* as the boat was winched up. "Oh, thank you, captain!" cried the captivated queen of the fairies to each sailor in turn as he stepped on deck. The last man to debark had his arms full of the great unwieldy crate. It was deposited on the deck and as Fay McQueen leaned near in a transport of anticipation the ship's carpenter applied hammer and chisel.

Yet when the lid was wedged up they all heard a strange silence within. There was no glad cackle of a rescued fowl. Fairy Butterfly pressed forward, knelt and thrust her arms under the slanting slate. "Wheuh's yo' chiggen, Ma'm McQueen?" she cried.

She groped further and in the remotest recess her hand encountered a sodden bundle of feathers. "Oh, happy day!" cried the dark damsel. "Dauh's yo' chiggen!" and she pulled forth the sorriest-looking yellow hen the world has ever seen.

Ex-Lulea was not worried. She knew she had passed good and sufficient spells. Her favorite was only temporarily the worse for wear. When Billina had squatted briefly and reassured herself that she was again at least on *navis firmus*, the hen clucked a bit and

began to look around her.

Suddenly she gave the squawk of her life and came speedily back to her full perceptions. Let go that she was seeing again that elusive crowd of fairies she'd lost violent track of more than a week ago. There among the collection of curious faces above her was the unmistakable one of Dorothy Gale!

While the fairy women all exclaimed at once, expressing their satisfaction at seeing again the hen they had feared lost to them forever (and Butterfly's voice sang out above the rest, crying, "Oh, hallelujah. It sho' is a happy day!"), Billina screamed greetings to her former protectress.

But slang it was the same deal all over again. In the real world the bird could only talk Chickenglish. Nobody could understand a word she was saying!

The girl from Kansas was not asleep, however. From being a mystified but very sympathetic bystander she now assumed a leading role. The thing was that, from long association, the chicken's native voice, not only her human-speech one, was intimately familiar to the Oz princess. Combine that with the russet-canary color of the fowl and her whole manner of self-presentation and there could be no doubt in Dorothy's mind: this, unbelievable as it might be, was none other than her old favorite and companion in hair-raising adventures, Billina the yellow hen!

The girl did not stop to consider the impossibility of the appearance in the Pacific Ocean of the hen she had last seen clucking contentedly on her roost in the back yard of the Palace of Magic in the Emerald City. She stepped to the crouching Queen of the Fairies, laid a restraining hand on her arm, and said, "Mrs. McQueen," higher honorifics were not in order within earshot of innocent mariners, "that chicken can talk as good English as you or I—"

Fay rocked back on her heels. Not bothering to consider the miraculosity of Miss Gale's knowing anything about the case, she blurted, "Why doesn't she then?"

Dorothy laughed merrily—and it lightened delightfully the tense mood of the moment. "Chickens don't... usually," she

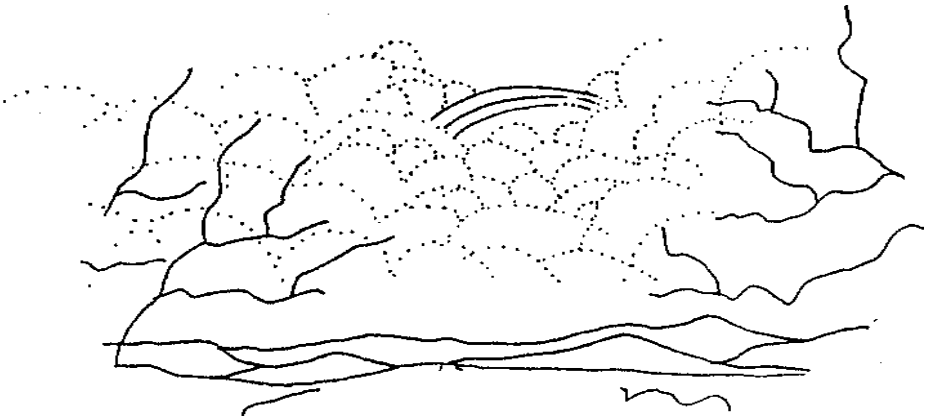
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averred, "not outside Oz."

"Of course. How stupid of me," said ex-Lulea. "My good fellows," she addressed the crewman or two who still stood about, and sent them on some makeshift errand. It wouldn't do to have mortal sailors hear a hen talk. Too much that was strange had already happened in the business school directress' vicinity aboard this ship. She didn't want the men mutinying or anything due to superstitious horror. Billina wasn't an albatross but just the same...

When the area had been cleared of non-initiates, Madame Fay rubbed the talk talisman she always had about her and murmured low but clear, "Let this fowl resume use of her original human language."

At once Billina's voice rang on the damp (though balmy) morning airs "Nå, äntlingen! Kära Ni, jag har ett jätteviktigt meddelande åt Er från Princessan av Oz!"



c h a p t e r t h i r t y - f i v e

It was a bit much. Queen Ozma of Oz had to stand in the yard and talk to the Swyne couple at their front door. Their home was too small to allow of inviting anyone inside. Nor did the pair seem particularly apologetic about the fact. One almost got the impression they preferred it that way.

“It’s a great pity, really,” said Mrs. Squealina Swyne, keeping her trotters crossed. “The house is enchanting! I’ve decorated it *so* beautifully. You’ve never seen anything like it! But alas, it’s just too tiny for entertaining. Sometimes I do wish we had more room—but of course if we did we wouldn’t have any excuse for not invit—Oh!” she broke off abruptly.

“What Mrs. Swyne is trying to say,” explained Prof. Grunter, “is that we would be but too delighted to be able to entertain on a grand scale, but our accommodations simply don’t run to it. So if you will state your business...”

O.Z. Diggs now took the floor, or rather the ground. There was no garden furniture for them even to be able to sit down. It looked as if the visit would be short.

“I have for some time,” he began, “been wanting to call and

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pay my respects. I have the honor to be associated professionally with your children—”

As he said this the Swynes looked at each other and Mrs. Swyne said, “So that’s him?” and the professor; “Yes, he’s the one.”

Not really flattered by the comments, the Wizard proceeded, “I am devoted to those talented performers, who appear under the name of the ‘Nine Tiny Piglets’—”

“Oh, is that what they call themselves?” broke in Squealina.

“I think Pigbert mentioned something to the effect the time he was here,” confirmed her husband.

“You can imagine my surprise,” pursued O.Z. Diggs, “when after a business relationship extending over many weeks, even months, the pigs and I arrived in Oz and I learned that their parents resided here. I know how worried you would have been all that time—”

“Were we worried?” mused Mrs. Swyne.

“Yes, I believe we were,” the professor tried to put a good face on their attitude. “Of course,” he appended, “we really didn’t know the children had been kidnapped until they turned up here and announced it. By then it was too late to worry.”

“Even so,” the Wizard went on, now only a little short of exasperated, “I have felt it my duty to approach you and reassure you yet again that the nine piglets are well and happy and living in the Emerald City.”

“Good ‘cess to them,” said Professor Swyne, achieving real heartiness.

“They might as well live there as anywhere,” sniffed his wife.

“May I take it then,” Diggs hurried on, “that I have your blessing on my enterprise of retaining the piglets with me and giving them a well-rounded education?”

“What’s it worth to you?” the professor startled everyone by asking. It wasn’t normal procedure or good form in Oz to expect to be paid for things done or kindnesses rendered.

“Oh—er—” said the Wizard, all at sixes and sevens.

Of a sudden the pig professor turned to his wife. “My dear, do I not smell the swill boiling over?”

Mrs. Squealina ducked out of sight on cue. It would be dreadful to get any splashes on her kitchen carpet.

Swyne turned back to the waiting Wizard. "I tell you what I'll do: My wife is house-proud. You may have noticed. But there's too little scope for her talent in this bijou bungalow. It's crammed to the rafters with her little treasures. We could do with a much larger place. You say you're a magician. The pigs also described how capable you were with your enchanter's staff. Could you make over this house to be three or four times larger than it is at present? And yet it must not appear any bigger to the eye of the beholder, lest we be inundated with importunate wayfarers wanting to guest us and eat us out of house and home."

O.Z. Diggs could still only say, "Oh—er..." He had never been asked before to use his magic to so ignoble an end.

Princess Ozma was much more pragmatic. The request would not essentially alter an already existing, if somewhat deplorable, state of affairs. She put in: "When I have returned to my fairy capital I can assist the good Wizard in fulfilling your wish. Once the reconstruction is effected—by magic means—it involves merely the invocation of a simple illusion. Granted!"

The pig professor at once became more genial and hospitable. He even stepped to one side so that the callers could peep within the cottage and verify the existence and beauty of Mrs. Squealina's cuspidors and antimacassars. He waxed effusive and nostalgic. "Observe the particularity with which each object is placed! Nothing could be more exquisite. Mrs. Swyne could not bear for one item to be out of place, or for one mote of duet to remain unswept away. For any refuse to be left lying about would be anathema to her. Picture then what was her grief when she was given to understand that she was with child. I sometimes despaired of her life as the weeks passed and her size increased so that she could not with ease attend to the tidying of our dwelling or the arrangement of her nicknacks. At last we took extreme measures: the nine piglets were born prematurely, the smallest (live!) swine the world has ever seen. But this was Oz and once alive they could not die. There remained no recourse but to pack them off to a boarding

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school the moment they could cope on their own. Luckily, in one of my professional journals we had read of an island in the far ocean where tininess was the norm. There the piglets' diminutive size would pass as the regular thing. We wrote for particulars and before many weeks had passed the young swine were on their way and the house again empty, swept, and garnished. Thus elegantly did we dispose of the litter."

c h a p t e r t h i r t y - s i x

It was only a momentary setback.

Captain Matson had taken care that his daughter not learn any Swedish. One didn't want that discrediting air of foreignness hanging over the family and its fortunes. Even so, the Scandinavian expletive did escape him from time to time and Lurline learned to recognize the rhythmic dactyle of Bohuslän speech. Hence, it was she who cried:

"For gosh sakes, she's speaking Swedish!"

At that the fairies all came to and realized that they knew exactly what the hen had said. When they had elected to blot from their memories the recollection of what they had been through in Luleg they forgot to forget the language.

The Fairy Queen cried, "Kyckling lilla! Så underbart att få se Dig igen! Du kan tro vi var ledsna—inte sent, flickor?—"

"För all del, Ere Majestät!" returned the fairies in chorus.

"—då vi trodde att vi aldrig fingo lära känna Dig närmare. Jag var halt utom mig av raseri då jag upptäckte att Du var borta. Va' jag skälde på manskpet! och även kaptenen fick känna på den vassa tungan. Men vad hjälpte dot—"

At this point Lurline Matson, who was only getting the odd word, drew Mrs. McQueen's attention to Dorothy, who wasn't getting any. The fairy stopped her stream of speech, turned several delightful shades, and said, "How idiotic can one get?"

She waved her pencil (now openly revealed to be a fairy wand) and instantly converted everyone present to full conversability in both English and Swedish, even Dorothy, who would never in a million years have any use of the latter language.[§]

"At last!!!" shrieked Billina, virtually collapsing with relief and gratification. "I've been desperate to communicate with you for more than a week, Your Fairy Majesty. Quick! There's not a moment to be lost. I'm sent by Princess Ozma of Oz; to request your urgent help in a matter that is beyond her powers of enchantment and which involves the welfare of all Oz!"

The girls all sat down on capstans and hatch-covers to hear the story. It took the yellow hen half an hour to tell it all in well chosen words and not leaving out any important details. When she had done, they all said, "Well...!" and could hardly speak for amazement at all that had happened, among which the crisis looming over Oz nearly got lost in the shuffle.

To think!: that the powerful fairy queen of Oz had been wandering in a desert, bereft of all that power, and that her emissary to the only one who could help had the terrible luck to be washed overboard for the second time in her life. The coincidences were too thick on the ground—or rather, on the water—to be able to handle; that of all places in the world Ambassador Billina should drift ashore on Teentyweent, with its intimate connection with Oz—and that Ozma's great friend Dorothy Gale should turn up on the same ship as did that fairy queen and mentor whom Ozma so urgently was seeking—and, not content with this, that a third Oz-connected personage should make her way to the same ship.

"Well, that part's not so coincidental." Ex-Lulea broke into the circle's half-articulated wonderings. They all stared at her. More marvels to be revealed?

[§]But wait a minute! See *A Swede in Oz*. Ed. note.

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"Yes," pursued the queen fairy. "Tell me, dear Billina: during your wanderings on the waves did you ever have the impression you were being helped along? in any mysterious way or other?"

"Did I!" ejaculated the chicken. "How interesting you should ask that, your grace. Not right at first, no, but after I left Teentyweent it was as if strange powers took over. To begin with, I was only aware of curious shapes half visible in the waters beneath me—"

"That would be the sea fairies, reconnoitring," posited the Queen. Everyone gaped.

"Then afterwards," pursued the hen, "dolphins took turns pushing that crate along." She glanced aside with some disdain at her floating prison of a week that stood abandoned some distance away. "But it was like that wasn't fast enough. The next thing I knew a whale picked me up and brought me here like an express train. It only dumped me when we were in sight of this ship a little while ago!"

Fay McQueen nodded. "As I said: I was an idiot! —and scoundrel. Of course as soon as I found you and your crate were missing I cast a general spell of protection in your favor. But then I got caught up in a mindless round of pleasure-seeking on Oahu and it wasn't until we were aboard *Lurline* that I had leisure during the long lazy days at sea to reflect on that strange passage: the unexplained appearance of a yellow chicken on the deck of a ship many sea miles from the nearest barnyard. I decided there was more there than met the eye and I became possessed of a great curiosity to know the meaning of the incident. I got in touch with Aquareine, queen of the ocean fairies, and requested her to have her far-flung subjects comb the broad Pacific. In case they encountered a hen in a coop still afloat they were to expedite her to my vessel as quickly as was convenient. Their friends the cetaceans were glad to assist in the rescue operation."

So simple when you heard it explained that way.

"But now to this cloud looming over Oz." The fairy queen spoke only partially figuratively. "Oh, how idiotic I've been," she reiterated in sorrow. "Poor Ozma — and poor Oz. Goodness knows

what's happened to them in the eight days since the poor girl tried to get help by sending you to me." Fay stroked the hen's now nearly dried feathers. They were still sticky with salt.

"I'm not so worried about Oz," remarked the chicken. "The problem's grave but probably wouldn't have got too much graver in a week. But I *am* awfully worried about how the Princess has managed since I left. What if she were still out on that dreary desert! I think she should be rescued without loss of time."

"It does make one uneasy," concurred the queen. "If Ozma had managed to receive other help before this she would certainly have sent subsequent word to me. I've had nothing—But how stupid! *of course!* Nobody knows I'm here! When they tried Burzee and got no answer—Tell me, my dear—" A sudden thought struck her. "—when the little Princess teleported you how did she word the command?"

"I was to turn up in the immediate presence of the Queen of the Fairies—*wherever* she might be. Ozma was clever that way."

"And the fact that she has sent no substitute emissary weighing less than eleven and a half pounds moat mean that she is still in the wilderness, far from her capital and her magic appurtenances."

"Not to mention," put in Billina, "my offspring in the palace courtyard, any one of whom would be glad to come."

"Yes! The case *is* grave. Indeed we must lose no time. So then, how many of us for Oz? Shall we all go?! A wave of the wand—"

Lurline Matson looked enchanted. Not only to be convinced that Oz was real, but to go there oneself! It—

But Dorothy Gale was looking stricken. To have her long-held wish granted so miraculously: an excuse, and a pressing one, to go to Oz! And then—her nimble brain reasoning speedily—to have to decline!

"Oh, your majesty," she mourned. "Lurline can't go to Oz!—and I can't either," she said after only a second's hesitation.

Lurline's face fell and all the fairies stared. *Not go to Oz?* even when invited by a fairy queen? It didn't make sense.

"No," explained Dorothy. "We're due in San Francisco day

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after tomorrow. What in the world is dear Captain Matson going to think—not to mention Miss Lilie—when they tell him his daughter disappeared off the ship in mid-ocean?”

Everybody gasped, and Lurline said, “Dad...!”

“And if Lurline can’t go I’m certainly not going,” declared Dorothy loyally and put her arm about her chum’s waist. “It’ll be bad enough trying to explain how twenty-eight lady passengers, and an important chicken to boot, vanished without a trace.”

Ex-Lulea was thoughtful. “Don’t let that last part disturb you, dear. My followers will wait ’til after the ship’s safely docked. And you were wrong in another particulars ‘Lurline’ *will* go to Oz.”

Before Miss Matson could get her hopes up again the queen fairy made haste to explain her little conceit: “When I meet her I don’t want Princess Ozma calling me by that other distasteful name whatever it was. And ‘Fay McQueen’ was never more than a stop-gap. I decided yesterday. I’m taking the name of this delightful ship where I have passed happy hours. ‘Lurline’: it goes trippingly on the tongue, whether you pronounce it ‘-leen’ or ‘-lye’n’. Also it will be a gratification to honor my new young friend—if you give consent, my dear...?”

Affectionately the queen of the fairies took Miss Matson’s hand.

The fairy band nodded complacently. They remembered. Things had come full circle.

c h a p t e r t h i r t y - s e v e n

The fairy princess of Oz was back at square one. A week out of her life and away from the claims of her loving subjects who sought her constantly to determine their suits at law (Ozma was her own Supreme Court and took those duties seriously)—and what had she to show for it?

Well, the friendship of her little protégée Lana Peethisaw, of course. Her acclamation as regent also of all the ghosts of Oz, indeed of all those who lived on in the magic land when their time in the great world of the real was done. And even the little detail of the Swyne couple's granting of formal fostership rights over their errant offspring to the gratified Wizard of Oz.

But the problem she had originally set off to seek to arbitrate was, if anything, with time, only aggravated. Not a word from Billina and it was now twenty-four hours that the Princess had been back in her capital city. Ozma's first act on her return had been to go to her thaumaturgical laboratory and reinforce the protective spells of Witch Glinda in favor of the hen.

Lulea, supreme ruler of all immortals exercising power in the land of Oz and continent of Sempernumquam, was, it seemed,

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not going to be able to be called on for assistance. Who then could Ozma turn to?

She shut herself up in the library of the Palace of Magic and began to read all the books she'd long promised herself to dip into and so far never had. Sorceress Glinda's wisdom and her possession of the great Book of Records notwithstanding, the richest store of books in all Oz was that in the royal library. The University of Oz would one day have a collection to rival it but that was in the future and besides would be mainly science and literature, rather than magic and fairy lore.

Her project took the young queen all weekend. It was not this time incantations and transformations she was concerned with. It was more like history and geography. If Lulea's vast power could not be tapped into, who otherwise might conceivably help? and where were they to be found?

Ozma filled a sizeable note-pad with her jottings. As soon as ever she would run across a new name and address she would despatch her maid Jellia to send yet another fairygram: Would the recipient drop *everything* and observe the utmost promptness in coming to the Capitol of Oz to render assistance in a national crisis?

Many and jumbled were the notes she took; toward the end perhaps even a bit chaotic:

"..fairy queen of Forest of Lurla on Isle of Yew... Groves of Trom, home of fairy Hallita... forest of Ethop: place that knooks revel in: wild & jungley; knooks guardians of trees... Zurline, Nymph queen... Queen of Water Sprites... King of Sleep Fays, somewhere in Kingdom of Dreams... Frost King & son Jack Frost... Sound Imps ...King & Kingdom of Wind Demons; ditto Light Elves: princes Flash & Twilight, constant companions of Elf kings Flash recklessly uses blinding flashes of lightning bolt & horn of gunpowder; Twilight, unguarded, throws all into darkness with great snuffer & black cloak ... Polychrome & Cloud (or Sky) Fairies... Spirit of Happiness (lives in Laughing Valley), & Spirit of Death...

"Above all other immortals (!?) are ranked Ak, Master Woodsman; Bo, Master Mariner; Kern, Master Husbandman... Fire Is-

landers with prince, Forge John... various fairy tribes of Boboland: Elfeons, Puckerts =? Notabells... fairy unicorn from Halidom... Aquareine, fairy ruler of Mermaids = Sea Fairies" (Ozma herself composed the longer and special message that went to Queen Aquareine.)

"Erma, Queen of Lights; 'King of Animals': their authority overlaps, counteracts? that of King of Light Elves? knooks or other animal fairies such as Beaver Fairies?

"Concludes all benevolent fairy beings of Sempernumquam mentioned by Royal Historian as well as other sources."

But now that she'd got going, the diligent Girl Ruler was not going to be limited to assistance from merely her own continent or by beings necessarily familiar to her countrymen. Dusty old tomes (even Jellia Jamb with her feather duster didn't get around to these volumes all that often) were hauled down and Ozma read up on fay folk never heard of in her own land. The list began to appear endless: elves, sylphs, knooks, imps, fays, sprites, ryls, kewpies, cobolds, naiads, nereids, gnomes, afrites, banshees, mermaids, erls, djinns (or jinns), nisser, tomtar, fatas, trolls, kelpies, harpies, hobgoblins (and plain goblins), bogies, sirens, ogres, dryads, oreads, leprechauns, brownies, demiurges, fauns, hamadryads, nixes, nymphs, peris, pixies, pigwidgeons, toovergodins...

As the devoted scholar got into the second half of the alphabet she came across references that piqued her fellow-feeling curiously. Under "Norway" she read, and noted down: "The Norwegian Thusser, or 'Mound Folk', are tall thin elves of great age and even greater skill. They are the master smiths the Eddas tell us about and are clever mechanics who know the secrets of old runes. They live inside mounds, with all the typical characteristics of village life: children, dogs, parties, dances, quarrels..."

"Today, the Christians have succeeded in driving a great number of the thusser out of the country and revile them as 'evil trolls'..."

In a volume on *Russia, Then and Now* she came across statements like "As the arms of Mother Church stretched out to embrace ever more of outlying cultures, feyas, karliks, domovoys,

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and such baggage fell into increasing disuse, large contingents of the fabulous creatures even fleeing the country to seek asylum in less prejudiced regions." "Tiresome religions," muttered the little queen to herself. "They spoil more fun than even politics do."

The Superiority of the Swedish Ethos contained the most shocking report of all: "Under the terms of an act of the Riksdag of 1853, reinforced generally by local ordinances, most forms of fairy life were outlawed. The sufferings of hundreds of thousands of displaced elves, fays, näckar, and tomtar were indescribable as they were driven like cattle to the borders and forcibly ejected, into countries scarcely more hospitable than that which they were leaving."

"Poor darlings," Ozma went on talking to herself. "Why weren't we informed?" That was more than half a century ago. Where did they all go? Where are they now?

"I wonder..." she mused on, "They might be more amenable than most to exercising their fairy gifts in a good cause in exchange for a safe refuge at last and a haven from their wanderings."

Sweden. But wasn't that where Queen Lulea herself had been off to lately to receive some kind of honorary award? How peculiar. Deporting all your fairy folk with one hand and summoning in others to be commemorated. That hardly made sense. A further veil of grey settled over Ozma's spirit. Suppose all had not gone so well for Lulea as assumed?

The girl ruler dispatched an urgent message to the Old Woman of the Mountain at Blåkulla. She'd know. And she carried on reading.

"Swedish elves (älvor) are Light Elves, not to be confused with trolls, with whom they have little in common.

"Habitat: live next to rivers, under hills, and in marshes. Their homes can be seen only once by humans and then vanish, never to be found again.

"Identifying marks: not daybound and can travel with ease through air, fire, wood, water, stone. The females ride sunbeams through keyholes. The males prefer to sit on the edges of moors, basking in the sunlight. Both sexes can foretell the future and are

guardians of ancient secrets. Because of their power over all things natural and their great beauty and strength, it is dangerous for mortals to come in contact with them.

“Occupations: by far their favorite and most characteristic is dancing. Can often be seen on moonlit nights, weaving choreographic patterns of incredible complexity, tirelessly capering to the delicate music of stringed instruments. The grass grows better where they have danced and rich circles of green spring up under their feet. The elfin dance remains the most dangerous temptation to those of the mortal world. Men who have stepped inside their magic circles and felt the whirling vibrations can never more find safe haven on earth...”

That was as far as the queen got by Monday evening when she began to be disturbed by unlikely sounds coming from the ballroom.

As requested, the members of Ozma’s court had left her strictly undisturbed all the weekend. They were told off to receive, to welcome, and to make feel at home the various fairy emissaries as they arrived. Now the little queen began to suspect that they had done so by staging an impromptu hoedown.

Just so. Making her entry in the fashion that was to become so popular among royalty in this new century of exaggerated modesty, Ozma suddenly appeared in the great chamber, unannounced, from behind a drapery. She was nearly caromed into by Polychrome, the rainbow’s daughter. As usual, Polychrome was dancing madly and at the moment was further engaged in confirming in her own mind her infatuation for her partner, the Shaggy Man, whom she would soon take the first substantive steps to attempt to capture for her own.[§]

“Oh, Your Majesty!” gasped the charming maiden, stopping in the middle of a back flip.

“Carry on, my dear,” Ozma reassured her. “I’ll just look on for a bit. But early in the morning we must all gather in solemn conclave.. I have something most pressing to discuss.”

[§] See *The Careless Kangaroo of Oz*. Editor’s note.

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She moved on to the refreshment tables and accepted a sup of dama-fruit punch from Jack Pumpkinhead. There she stood looking out over the fantastic sight of all the fairies and immortals from the entire continent in a blaze of shimmering colors, moving in the mazy motions of a gavotte.

Suddenly the chandeliers flared bright as suns in a most uncharacteristic fashion, the orchestra faltered, the dancers were put off their stroke. A curious hush fell over all.

Then, in the middle of the ballroom, the moat majestic-looking of all fairies was seen resplendent. In her arms she held an excited-appearing chicken with primrose-yellow feathers.

c h a p t e r t h i r t y - e i g h t

“How d’ye do?” said the Queen of the Fairies to Princess Ozma of Oz, who advanced rapidly towards her, “My name’s Lurline,” she hurried to put in before the Girl Ruler could say anything. “I believe you sent for me.”

“‘Lurline!’” repeated Ozma, startled. “Queen Lurline! Yes, of course,” she said, remembering her history. “How very kind of you to come!” The two did not shake hands, Lurline’s being full of chicken.

“Very sorry to be so late getting here, don’t ye know! This splendid bird did her best, but I wasn’t on my toes. Stills perhaps I’m not too late,” said the fairy queen, gazing about. “This doesn’t look like a scene of disaster.”

Ozma colored. “Well, no. In fact the focus of our problem doesn’t lie in the Emerald City. But I’d sent for all the available fairy talent to seek their advice, failing that of your own gracious self. Actually the dance was unplanned, I believe. I’ve only just been alerted to it myself.”

Lurline sighed. “The girls would so have enjoyed this! But I dare say duty comes before pleasure,” she went on—a little mysteriously as far as Ozma was concerned. The queen fairy saw the

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questioning expression on the other little queen fairy's face. As they walked toward temporary thrones set up at the side of the hall Queen Lurline began to relate the main heads of her tangled tale.

Ozma had taken the yellow hen in her arms and now smoothed her feathers lovingly as she marveled at the story of her adventures. "Billina, my dear," she murmured, "did you do all that?"

"Yes. And then some," the hen admitted braggadociously, loving the limelight, and she added some further details of her stay on the island of Tinitiwinitihumunuo'ahonomua.

"What a coincidence!" exclaimed Ozma, as if there weren't enough of those in this story already. "I've just come from visiting the Tiny Piglets' parents. Oh, Pigmy would love to hear the news from Teentyweent. I'll send for him." This she proceeded to do, while Queen Lurline accepted Jack Pumpkinhead's invitation to perform a cake-walk.

"And, Billina," went on the little Oz queen presently, "to think you've been with Dorothy! I long with all my heart to see the princess. I hope she is much grown since last I saw her."

"Ay, madam, but I would not have it so."

"Why, my good chicken, it is good to grow. And in the world outside of Oz there's nothing that would slow down her coming to look—let's see; why, fair fifteen she'll be by now."

"Mmm—and looks it," reported the hen. "But I want her—selfishly, I guess—to go on looking like she did when I first knew her. To me that's the real Dorothy."

"To lots of people, I guess," admitted Ozma. "But how real is Dorothy going to seem to anyone if, living for years on end in the outside world, she never grows to appear older than six?"

"I wish we could get her back here to Oz for good," said Billina.

"Me too," agreed the princess colloquially. "Next time she comes here I don't think we'll let her get away again."

With that promise-threat the two tried to be content.

But now Jack Pumpkinhead was escorting the breathless Queen Lurline back to her place. "And now to affairs, my dear," she said, and accepted a cup of cocoa the Scarecrow brought.

"Billina speaks of an encroachment of the Winkie country—its colorization, at least—upon the territory of your Gillikin people. Please let me have complete details."

Ozma did so; at suitable length. She ended up saying, "The frequent and severe sand- and dust-storms are bad enough but in the long run the xanthification of everything east of Winkieland is a graver problem. I don't think we, any of us, want the whole of Oz turning yellow. But my poor fairy power is not enough—I know—I've tried—to counteract a force of nature."

"I understand," said Lurline solemnly. "Nor do I command other than fairy powers, albeit perhaps in some degree more potent than yours." She sat a while and pondered.

"There may be a way," the great fairy pronounced at last. "Fairy power can, at least, influence a force of nature to work against another force of nature." Ozma hung on her words. "My dear, do you know what 'dark matter' is?"

The Oz princess found the words suggestive but could not satisfactorily define them as an established concept. Her mentor had to explain.

"All space is dark, outside the immediate vicinity of stars—or 'suns', if you will. This is because light, which ought properly to suffuse the universe, is sucked away by countless lumps of every size—of so-called 'dark matter,' of infinite density, which hurtle through space endlessly. These lumps of dark matter—or let us call them 'lod'ms' for brevity—seem to have one dominant characteristic: they are the most powerful magnets you can imagine—or, rather, fail to imagine. Everything is drawn to them, since everything includes light, one can understand why they cannot be seen, or sensed in any way, except by their effects. And yet they populate the universe thickly."

"If that be so," Ozma could not help interjecting, "why is the Earth not constantly bombarded by them?"

"It is!" declared the Fairy Queen. "But that is another trait of lod'ms—*very* little understood, by the way. In some inexplicable way they seem to take up no space. They can pass straight through a solid body and leave no trace of their passage!"

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“You’re right,” said Ozma with a smile, “I can not picture it.”

“Dark matter has one further characteristic,” went on the queen fairy. “Over time, it would appear that very small lod’ms can indeed reach a point of satiety. Their magneticism remains great but they no longer absorb further solid matter. They become in short what would appear to be merely balls of rock of incredible density, while at their heart remains the intensely powerful grain of dark matter.”

Ozma waited.

Queen Lurline went on: “If we could harness one such it might solve your problem, your majesty.”

The implications of the magnitude of her mentor’s ability left the little Oz queen breathless.

“You would be able to influence... to direct nay, to ‘harness’! —the power of a particle of dark matter, Your Feyness?”

The Queen of the Fairies explained.

c h a p t e r t h i r t y - n i n e

At about seven o'clock in the morning of June thirtieth, 1906, a giant fireball was seen moving rapidly over a region of marshy ground and impenetrable forests near the Tunguska River in north-central Siberia. Presently a thunderous crash was heard over an area two hundred miles in diameter as an enormous explosion leveled trees throughout hundreds of square kilometers of forest.

Even six hundred miles from the point of impact three or four dull thuds in succession were heard—“like artillery fire,” as one witness described it—and the atmospheric shock wave circled the earth twice. Horses and men were flung off their feet many miles away and windows were broken as far as fifty miles distant, while the water in rivers rose in huge waves. Over an area as large as the English county of Middlesex all trees were flattened: laid out like felled ten-pins, with their trunks radiating outward from the center of impact.

A huge column of fire over twelve miles high rose from the earth. It appeared to be about a mile across. In addition to trees blown down, thousands of conifers burned throughout a twenty-mile-wide area. The charred carcasses of a large herd of reindeer

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were afterwards found, but curiously there is no record of any human fatalities.

As it was early in the morning, most people were still asleep. One witness recalled how his tent was blown into the air, occupants and all. These suffered bruises and some were left unconscious, but that was the extent of their injuries.

At Vanovara trading station a man raised his axe to hoop a cask, when "the sky split in two" and flames shot up above the forest. The whole northern part of the sky appeared covered with fire. There was a bang in the sky and a mighty crash on the ground and the man was thrown down.

A plowman heard sudden bangs and his horse fell to its knees. Horses galloped off in panic, dragging plows, while others collapsed.

A washerwoman was scrubbing wool in the Kam River. She heard a noise like the fluttering of wings of a huge bird, and a great swell of water came up the river. After that came a single sharp bang, very loud. A wall of water was also driven up the Angara River.

Some carpenters heard two crashes, then after a third they fell backwards off a building they were at work on. The crashes were followed by a noise like stones falling from the sky or guns firing. The ground trembled.

Fir forests were found to have been bent over by a hot wind blowing peat from the north, so strong that it carried off loose soil and left traces of its passage on the surface of the ground.

A farmer engaged in harrowing heard a single loud report, then saw an elongated flaming object flying through the sky, the front of it much broader than the tail, and of a color like fire seen by daylight. The object was many times larger than the appearance of the sun but much dimmer and it could be looked at with the naked eye. Behind the flames trailed what looked like dust, and blue streamers from the flames were left behind. After the flaming object had disappeared the farmer heard bangs louder than gunshots and window panes were broken.

People everywhere abandoned work and crowds gathered in

the streets in terror.

On that date in 1906 the Earth was crossing the trajectory of the Beta Taurid meteor shower, which is connected with the orbit of the comet Encke. Comets consist mostly of ice with a proportion of methane and ammonia. Hence, it has been posited that the "Tunguska event" was caused by an icy cometary fragment about one hundred meters across, weighing a million tons and moving at thirty kilometers a second, or seventy thousand miles an hour.

However, despite the tremendous explosion, the shock waves, and the vast fire, there remained no impact crater. Although a large number of tiny diamonds were found strewn over the site there was no other trace of debris. A complete absence of radio-activity at the impact site would seem to indicate that the colliding object is likely to have been anti-matter annihilated on contact.

Could it have been a mini-black hole that passed through Earth and out the other side?

“Mmm,” said the queen of the Fairies, “—but not out the other side.”

Princess Ozma was crying quietly but now she looked up with a tear-stained face and said with alarm, “Not out?”

“No. As near as I can reckon—” Lurline put aside her abracadabacus and prepared to elucidate: “—the particle of dark matter is now lodged about forty miles below the surface of the earth in the southern part of the Deadly Desert, between the Winkie Country and the Kingdom of Dreams, but rather nearer the former.”

“But, oh!” cried Ozma, shocked. She had thought this interplanetary power play a strictly one-shot, temporary phenomenon: a massive geophysical twist to be accomplished one time for all and, with that, basta. “Won’t that represent an ever-present, on-going danger?”

“Why, no. Once a fragment of dark matter stabilizes in a particular location it is quite harmless. Why? did you think it will blow up or something?”

"I don't know. But if it continues to suck everything to it as it did before...?"

"But that's just what we've—well, *I've* counted on! At first I did consider shifting the Earth on its axis, so the Poles would be at the equator, and then the prevailing 'westerly' winds would change course and blow what we would think of as north-south. But then I decided that would create too many mix-ups generally. No, this way is much more elegant."

"Please explain, Your Grace."

"Well, an I said, the magnetic power of the fragment of dark matter now buried thousands of fathoms deep in the earth will remain potent. The 'fragment,' by the way, is about as big as a thumbnail. All the solid matter associated with it was atomized on impact: that's what made the big bang and fire—"

Ozma wept afresh.

"Come, my dear," said Lurline, "don't grieve too much. What's done—although undoable—could have been much worse.

"As I was saying, the lod'm will naturally continue to exercise its pull. This will involve a certain amount of suction of the earth material directly around it. We may even observe a general lowering of the desert level—oh, only by a few yards, well, say a quarter of a mile at most—on the surface of the earth above the fragment. But that tendency too will change. As the lod'm reaches its level of satiety the inward-attracted earth around it may build up in a sort of wen effect, resulting possibly in a hill visible on the (sunken) desert surface.[§] It will be quite interesting to keep tabs on that as the years go by.

"More important, for our purposes," the great fairy went on, "is the fact that that magnetic drag will, first and easiest of all, attract all mere winds and air currents. Winkie topsoil has already ceased to blow over eastward into the land of the Gillikins. Your

[§] In fact, (at least in Alternate Oz) the result was two great rocks of surpassing density and, in themselves, great magnetic force, which dust broke the surface of the desert. See A. Volkov: *The Wooden Soldiers of Oz*. Curiously, in Alternate Oz, the excrescences are located in the desert beyond the Munchkin, rather than the Winkie, country. Editor's note.

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problem is solved."

"Oh, I know! and I'm infinitely grateful to you, Your Grace," exclaimed the girl ruler. "But I can't forget those poor reindeer!" Fresh paroxysms of weeping.

"I wish you wouldn't keep harping on that, my dear," said Queen Lurline with a trace of acerbity. "I've *said* I'm sorry. I miscalculated. The 'comet' was supposed to have come down in a totally unpopulated region of pack ice just short of the North Pole. Let us, rather, count ourselves fortunate that the meteorite itself came to rest, finally, pretty exactly where I intended."

"Oh, I know. But just the same, it spoils my satisfaction. I almost wish..."

"What?"

"That we hadn't sent to Siberia to know the full extent of the disaster."

Lurline, made of sterner stuff than the gentle little Oz queen, replied: "In the spirit of scientific enquiry one has to take the bitter with the sweet. Anyway, that wasn't strictly my doing, was it? Admittedly, I sent word to the girls aboard *Lurline* to pick up what information they could on the way home to Burzee. They had planned to head east to collect those stragglers at New York and Macao but when they got my message a contingent transported themselves west again instead, to Vladivostok. But as you quite well know, the true close-up story of the tragedy came via those domovoys *you* sent for. They were actual eye-witnesses in own persona to what happened."

"Yes, yes, it's my own fault," sobbed Ozma. "That's what makes it worse. But I couldn't lose any time in sending out a general invitation to displaced wee-folk everywhere to come and make their home in Oz. I hadn't realized there were still plenty of domovoys and karliks hidden out in obscure corners of the great Russian empire. Apparently there's quite a concentration of them in Siberia..."

"Your motivations in everything and in every respect were irreproachably kind and well-intentioned, my dear and worthy Ozma," stated the ranking fairy queen with great dignity. "Any-

way, since you've also sent for the deer themselves to spend their post-lives in Oz, what's the loss?"

"Untimely earth-death is always sad," declared Ozma, "even if some of the sufferers do get to come to this country afterwards and live on. It is felt—and I share the feeling—that a natural full life in the great world is preferable to a 'consolation' existence in Oz."

"'Consolation' life you call it?"

"That's how I've come to think of it. As near as I can determine it only occurs in the case of individuals of great promise who die before that promise is fulfilled. I've been reading up on it in the library."

Ozma's attack of the weeps seemed to be subsiding as she got interested in describing her intellectual pursuits. "Incidentally one very quaint and curious volume of forgotten lore told how a sovereign fairy could invoke transmigration even in the case of individuals lacking any particular promise. So of course I did that in the matter of the poor reindeer. But after all, eight thousand deer suddenly transplanted to that Ice Plateau—!"

"You said you found the place totally unpopulated," returned Lurline. "Sounds like a most equitable arrangement to me."



c h a p t e r f o r t y - o n e

The Sawhorse was harnessed and the red wagon sparkled, fresh furbished after its return from the Munchkin country and now ready for a sally into the Winkie one. Ozma was going to make a progress to the far northwest but this time with adequate preparation, not impromptu and essentially harum-scarum as last time.

After a week-long joyous reunion of Queen Lurline of All Fairies with as many of her far-flung tributaries as she had in fact ever seen gathered in one place, the great enchantress had received a royal send-off back to Burzee, where further enjoyable reunions awaited her. Fellow Queen Zurline and a bunch of the visiting ryls went along with her. The parting with Billina the hen had been particularly affecting.

But that was not before Lurline had had a farewell chat with her friend Lurline just off the *Lurline*. She found out Captain Matson's home number and put through a call via a hook-up of her two-way wrist wireless with the local San Francisco telephone system.

"Mission accomplished," the queen of fairies announced matter-of-factly to the California girl. "Everything fine here. But how

are you, my dear?"

"Oh, hunky-dory, your majesty," declared Lurline. "Lovely to see the home folks again. And of course I can't let Dorothy go—"

"Oh, yes, how is Miss Gale?" the queen remembered to ask.

"Splendid... That is, she's missing the girls in the band like mad—oh, and her friend, the hen."

"Billina? She's right here. Would Dorothy like to have a word with her?"

"Oh, boy. I know she would! Wait a second, your highness."

So Dorothy came on and talked to Billina, and then there was nothing for it but Dorothy must speak with Ozma and the two got very sentimental and Dorothy declared that it had been an awful wrench not to get to go to Oz this time, and Ozma also regretted it desperately and said that they must make some arrangement whereby the Kansas girl could come to Oz permanently and Dorothy promised that she would work on it but that it was so hard because of her aunt and uncle but naturally—

"Of course your first loyalty is to them, my dear," said Ozma. "Your loyalty to your friends is one of your most striking—and admirable traits. And now that to Miss Matson as well—"

"Yes, Lurl is fabulous!" gushed Dorothy. "She's by far my best girl friend! I don't know—oh, what am I saying?! Oh, Ozma, how stupid I am! How could I—Oh, Lurl don't look at me like that! Oh, Ozma, this is terrible! Oh, Lurl...!" The rest of Dorothy's speech was drowned in gasps and sobs.

Lurline Matson took the phone.

"Princess Ozma? This is Lurline Matson. Dorothy has told me so much about you. Poor girl, she's having a bit of a seizure. But we're not going to hold it against her, are we? Having a new friend doesn't mean there's any less room in your heart for the old—what?... Yes, exactly: that's very good: 'It just makes the heart get bigger.' I'll tell her that!... Oh, she'll get over it.

"I've got a special treat for her. We're going riding this afternoon. Yes, isn't it ridiculous?: she doesn't ride! She says in Kansas horses are for plowing, not riding around on. And she's even *got* a horse! but she never thought of riding him... Oh, it's an old cab-

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horse named Jim. But of course!: that's right, the cab-horse has been in Oz, so Dorothy claims. I guess everyone's been to Oz but me. I'd love to go but—well, we'll see. Thank you!... and I'll never forget that I have spoken with the fairy Queen of Oz."



But now the last gossamer draperies of the last sprites and pixies had fluttered into invisibility and the great green Palace of Magic echoed emptily with their absence. Ozma couldn't bear it and sought comfort in the intimacy of the little company of friends who were setting out for Cut-Out County.

Ozma drove, of course, and Lana sat beside her. The original membership of the original expedition was reconstituted, and the Scarecrow occupied the back seat with the Yellow Hen (oh—and the Wizard of Oz) while H.M. Wogglebug flew lookout overhead. Lana's now inseparable companion, Gerry the Giraffe, cantered along beside. He was getting more and more back to his old accustomed easy gait every day.

Jack Pumpkinhead and the Soldier with the Green Whiskers saw the party off. Jellia Jamb put a massive basket of cold bacon sandwiches on the floor of the back of the wagon. Some of Billina's children ran after them in the dust when the vehicle started off at a smart pace.

This time they took leisure to see everything properly: Loonville, the Ice Town. They rode the little ferry across to Kite Island and spent an afternoon flying—and, in the case of Prof. Wogglebug, even becoming!—kites. For they were not going anywhere that couldn't wait. Who knew when this particular company—if ever—would pass that way again?

Nights they spent under the paper or cloth marquees O.Z. Diggs was getting clever at erecting out of whatever magazines or scarves people happened to have along. The Jaunty Giraffe stood guard, what time he wasn't snoozing against whatever trees were tall enough and anywhere handy. He had the Scarecrow for company in wakeful moments.

The lazy days, dawdling along, seemed to inspire poetess Peethisaw to renewed heights of creativity. The Conference of Fairies at the Emerald City appeared to have made a great impression on her so that now her effusions were full of allusions to the Little Folk. Although the last of the elves and goblins had been seen in the flesh the day Queen Lurline left town, there was nothing to stop Lana from enjoying continued delight in their company in dreams. That's how it happened that she came to breakfast one morning with this creation (in lieu of newspapers) for the entertainment of her companions:

"Hello, down there.

Can you see me?

Sssshhh!

I'm hiding

'cause there's

a little elfin boy

looking for me.

He's 'it'.

And I don't want

to be 'it'

with him.

So sssshhh!

Don't tell him

I'm here.

(You can tell him

about the fairy

hiding behind

that flower though!)"

This was so well written and the Ozzish was so good that everyone gave congratulations and felicitated her on the excellent work.

Maybe they shouldn't have done that quite so declaratively because it seemed to make her muse(s) sweep particularly low over her, with the result that Lana spent the whole rest of the day, as they dogged along, with Billina the hen on her lap and a dreamy expression on her face.

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At dinner time she was able to move her companions with the following:

Please, come knock at my door.

Here I am waiting, waiting within.

Rap firm and true,

For if you knock too softly,

Though I fain would,

I may not hear.

But if you knock too loudly

I may fear,

Remembering one grim visitor

And I a tender fern

Beneath the giant's step.

Please come to my cottage.

One step will take you far.

Don't be a stranger to my gate.

With arms extended I await.

Is that a storm aloud on your brow?

Please come and see my garden!

We'll change that cloud to cleansing showers,

Trade your rain for friendly flowers

And garlands of sweet scents.

Knock, knock upon my door,

That I may welcome you inside.

And see! there is the seat I proffer,

And here the warmth of company,

And on the hearth, a gentle fire..."

Princess Ozma was so convinced of the efficacy of the measures taken by Lurline, Queen of the Fairies, to put a stop to the encroachments of the Winkie coloration upon the territory of the Gillikins that she didn't bother to follow the current color dividing line between the two lands to its end. Perhaps too, somewhere, subconsciously, she a little dreaded any further encounter with the unsavory Flatheads. Instead, she laid out a route more westerly, so that in time the party in the red wagon came in sight of the

woolen walls of the little capital city of Patch off to the southwest.

At the following crossroads they took the turning for Kuma Party. That proved to be quite a different sort of party from there own. They spent the last night of their journey there. What with the marigold wine that was served (in tulip cups) it turned out to be party-party far into the night.

You can be sure that Miss Peethisaw was a busy little person after they at length made it to her cottage in Out-Out County. She felt that she had been, all the long days of her travels with Ozma, only receiving hospitality above and beyond the call of duty and especially at the end of the trip, with those weeks at the girl ruler's capital. She had received some buffets too, of course: that tour in the dust storm, their sufferings on the ice plateau, even the inhospitality of the Swynes. Now it was time for her to offer and what she meant to offer was going to be all good.

Leaving Ozma and the Scarecrow to give Wizard Diggs a conducted tour of Honey Hill, Lana dived into her toy kitchen. Everything was little-girl-sized, but it worked. Throwing a pile of clams into a colander, she set water to boil. She got busy with milk, cream, syrup, honey, malt, and an egg beater. She put oil on to heat in the cast-iron pot and soon corn was popping sweet music.

In half an hour everything was ready. Lana went out in the garden, where Billina was having her own meal already, of a nice assortment of grubs. "These are as tasty as any I've found in Oz," commented the hen.

"I'm glad," Bald Lane. "Eat your fill. You didn't care to see Honey Hill again?"

"Since I'm not allowed to eat the bees there it would have seemed rather a feast of painted grapes."

Lana strolled on down a path lined with California poppies to where, beyond the garden gate, the Jaunty Giraffe rested, legs folded under him, beneath a spreading baobab tree. The girl sat down in the high grass beside him and leaned her back against his flank. They had no need for words.

Presently Billina followed along the path and with a cackle

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scrambled into Lana's lap. "I like it here," she said, her eyes half-lidded in drowsy contentment.

"Do you, Billina? I wish you'd stay. You know—oh, I know everything's always fixed and perfect in Cut-Out County, but just the same, I'm going to be lonely when you all go..."

Billina opened one eye speculatively and looked up. "You mean that? about staying here?"

"I do, I do." The little girl was warm in her insistence. "I have Gerry and I'm so fond of him, but for company *inside* the house..." She let her invitation remain unrearticulated. "But you'd miss the high life in the Emerald City. And it wouldn't be right to keep you out of all the Oz adventures in years to come."

"If they're going to be as much fun as this last one," clucked the hen, remembering her ten nights in a barred room, and that room floating half submerged in salt water, "I think I'd just as soon skip 'em."

So that was settled and no more needed to be said. They sat on silently, just resting... and remembering. Oh, lazy days and warm still country twilights. The high soft laughter from the quarters. The golden warmth and security of those days.

Presently Lana Peethisaw took from her apron pocket her battered old pad and pencil and she wrote:

"In the long tall green grass
with my knees bent and the sun beating down,
making new freckles on my nose,
I see castles in the clouds.
Beautiful tall enchanted castles
with billowing flags waving in the wind.
The wind changes the shapes of the flags
and the castles change too,
into a wide fluffy weeping willow,
whose dangling branches partly hide
a young boy talking to a butterfly.
The butterfly flies away
and the air from its fluttering wings
changes the weeping willow

into a giant rose about to bloom.
As its petals open I can see a tiny fairy
sleeping contentedly inside.
She opens her eyes and, seeing me,
shyly closes the petals.
The rose is altered to a ship
sailing far out at sea.

I feel the gentle rolling
of the waves of grace beneath me.
I fall asleep and sail the ship
into the sunset of long dreams.



c h a p t e r f o r t y - t w o

The wogglebug with the light flimsy Scarecrow on his back had flown on ahead and Ozma and the Wizard were left to make a swift but essentially repetitive journey by red wagon on their own. As the Sawhorse raced across the miles the two passengers sped the time in beguiling talk.

The companions from whom they had just parted naturally formed the immediate topic of their conversation.

“A curious trio,” commented O.Z. Diggs at the reins. Ozma was having a well-earned rest on this journey home. “—but each one most likable in his way.”

“Yes, I’m devoted to them all,” affirmed the princess.

“But perhaps ‘curious’ was the right word,” attested the Wizard. “There was something I didn’t quite grasp. It’s—well, curious—but somehow I felt Billina was the realest of the three. The little poetess was brilliant with her art and the giraffe as jaunty and jolly as you like. But after all there was something the least bit pale pastel—about those two.”

Ozma stared. Diggs caught her silence and threw a quick glance her way. He was astonished to find her agape—as much as a

delicate princess of Oz could look agape.

"Oh, Wizard, I thought you guessed," she breathed.

"'Gussed', your majesty?" he said, flustered, knowing he'd missed something.

"Oh, O.Z., I should have spoken." Ozma was really contrite and the Wizard didn't know why. "Don't you remember? Like—well, at the phone, remember?, when Queen Lurline called San Francisco. We all had a word with the girls, you too but not Lana."

"She'd never met them," said Diggs reasonably.

"But that wasn't the reason. I didn't invite her to speak—nor did she ask. Her voice wouldn't have carried."

"Not carried?" echoed the Wizard, acting awfully dense.

"Yes, little Lana can never have any personal contact with the outside world. On the other hand, she fits in beautifully in Oz—because she can never die."

Finally, the Wizard got it. "I see. Because she has already."

Ozma gave a little crooning sound of assent. Then they were silent.

"May I know?" said Diggs presently. "The circumstances?"

"Of course." Ozma settled herself, half turned aside to speak toward the Wizard's ear. "I heard of it during those two bleak days in the derelict house. I'm afraid it didn't make the time any jollier for us, but I think it was a relief for the little girl to speak of it to someone..."

O.Z. broke in. "But Lana's a Winkie! and Winkies *don't* die."

"Of course when these individuals come to Oz, they appear as natives. That's the way it works! Certainly it makes their life here easier. But didn't you notice? Lana says 'Yiss' not 'Yes.' She's a little New Zealand girl."

"New Zealand!" exclaimed the Wizard. "I wondered at the accent—and one or two turns of phrase."

"She had leukemia. Her death was long, drawn-out and agonizing. I believe her parents were completely devastated by the loss. Lana had a little sister but it was herself, so young and gifted and full of charm, in whom the hopes of the family rested. Now, as I can learn—I'm new at this, Wizard. Remember it's just five

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years and a bit since I came to the throne. There's still so much to find out!—but as far as I can discover it is only, in the case of human beings, those who *can* expect to come to Oz who can expect to come to Oz.

“That sounds like a conundrum, doesn't it? What I mean to say is this: that apparently only persons who know about Oz come here; those who believe in it and those who actually wish for it. Now it appears that during those long sad weeks Lana's mother read to her the English classics and then at the town library she discovered others: American books. At once the little girl loved the tales of Oz and I gather they were the very last thing in her mind when the time came. That's the way it happens...”

“But Gerry then? the young giraffe. Is he—?”

“Yes, the same thing. The story is equally distressing. Of course Gerry hadn't read any Oz books! But the thing occurs in the same way with regard to animals: promising, and cut off before their time.

“Gerry had been at a small zoo in southern England only a few weeks but was—he modestly confessed—already the favorite of the crowds. Intelligent and frisky and not shy with the public. They called him even then the ‘jaunty giraffe.’

“Then one morning he tried to leap a shallow dividing ditch: never a wise thing for a giraffe to do, but he was young and inexperienced—and alone at the zoo, with none of his own kind about to serve as models for behavior. He leapt, and the ground was wet and he slipped—and came down spraddled, the four legs splayed out in the four directions. He couldn't fall any further and he couldn't scramble up. The young giraffe was trapped by his own legs.

“The zoo folk, who were devoted to him, were distraught, but what could they do? Nobody thought quickly enough or they might have brought a construction crane from a distance, but that would have had to be by railway and the zoo was not near the line. They had to stand there and watch him die by inches, silently, struggling to raise himself... until his strength gave out. And all the zoo public looking on: it was right inside the perim-

eter fence—until the authorities had grace enough to close off the road until it should be over...

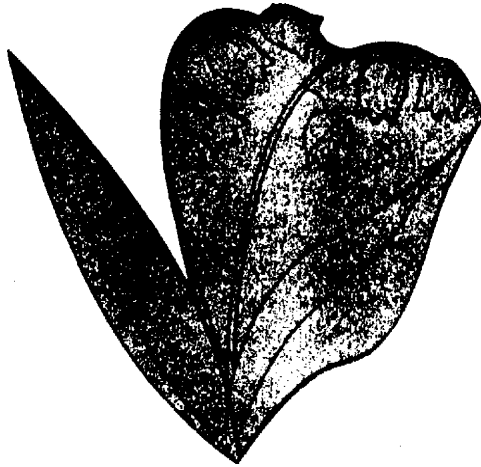
“And so Gerry same to Oz.”

“His awkward gait, at first,” said O.Z. Diggs. “I wondered about that.”

“Yes,” said Ozma.

Let’s leave them there: speeding onward to the green city far away where it is never too late for dreams to be made real.

Meanwhile, in another part of Oz, a little girl and her giraffe still play along the road and over the hill where the sun is always high but the air is cool.



Workington, Cumbria, 17 August 1988
Lund, 9 May 1989