



The CARELESS  
KANGAROO  
*of* Oz

The Oz Book for 1912

founded on & continuing the  
stories by

March Laumer

The Vanitas Press



Copyright © 1988 by March Laumer  
All rights reserved  
THE VANITAS PRESS  
Platslagarevägen 4 E 1, 22230, Lund, Sweden

First provisional edition  
Second provisional edition: 2006

Reproduced simultaneously in the United States and Sweden

Published with the long-standing encouragement of  
CONTEMPORARY BOOKS Inc., Chicago

This book is dedicated to  
DENNIS McNICHOLAS ..... talented illustrator  
JOHN FRICKE ..... able editor  
PAUL RITZ ..... kindly critic

OPIUM BOOKS number 29

As they rode along the pretty green lane toward Fuddlecumjig, they espied a kangaroo sitting by the roadside. The poor animal had its face covered with both its front paws and was crying to bitterly that the tears coursed down its cheeks in two tiny streams and trickled across the road where they formed a pool in a small hollow.

The Sawhorse stopped short at this pitiful sight and Dorothy cried out, with ready sympathy: "What's the matter, Kangaroo?"

"Boo-hoo! Boo-hoo!" wailed the kangaroo; "I've lost my mi-mi-mi— Oh, boo-hoo! Boo-hoo!"

"Poor thing," said the Wizard, "she's lost her mister. It's probably her husband, and he's dead."

"No, no, no!" sobbed the kangaroo. "It—it isn't that. I've lost my mi-mi— Oh, boo-hoo!"

"I know," said the Shaggy Man; "she's lost her mirror."

"No; it's my mi-mi-mi— Boo hoo! My mi— Oh, boo-hoo!" and the kangaroo cried harder than ever.

"It must be her mince pie," suggested Aunt Em.

"Or her milk toast," proposed Uncle Henry.

"I've lost my mi-mi-mittens!" said the kangaroo, getting it out at last.

"Oh!" cried the Yellow Hen, with a cackle of relief. "Why didn't you say so before?"

"Boo-hoo! I—I couldn't," answered the kangaroo.

"But, see here," said Dorothy, "you don't need mittens this warm weather."

"Yes, indeed I do," replied the animal, stopping her sobs and removing her paws from her face to look at the little girl reproachfully. "My hands will get all sunburned and tanned without my mittens, and I've worn them so long that I'll probably catch cold without them."

"Nonsense!" said Dorothy. "I never heard before of any kangaroo wearing mittens."

"Didn't you?" asked the animal, as if surprised.

## THE CARELESS KANGAROO OF OZ

---

"Never!" repeated the girl. "And you'll probably make yourself sick if you don't stop crying. Where do you live?"

"About two miles beyond Fuddlecumjig," was the answer. "Grandmother Gnit made me the mittens, and she's one of the Fuddles."

"Well, you'd better go home now, and perhaps the old lady will make you another pair," suggested Dorothy. "We're on our way to Fuddlecumjig, and you may hop along beside us."

So they rode on, and the kangaroo hopped beside the red wagon and seemed quickly to have forgotten her loss. By and by the Wizard said to the animal:

"Are the Fuddles nice people?"

"Oh, very nice," answered the kangaroo; "that is, when they're properly put together. But they get dreadfully scattered and mixed up, at times, and then you can't do anything with them."

"What do you mean by their getting scattered?" inquired Dorothy.

"Why, they're made in a good many small pieces," explained the kangaroo, "and whenever any stranger comes near them they have a habit of falling apart and scattering themselves around. That's when they get so dreadfully mixed, and it's a hard puzzle to put them together again."

"Who usually puts them together?" asked Omby Amby.

"Anyone who is able to match the pieces. I sometimes put Grandmother Gnit together myself, because I know her so well I can tell every piece that belongs to her. Then, when she's all matched, she knits for me, and that's how she made my mittens. But it took a good many days' hard knitting, and I had to put Grandmother together a good many times, because every time I came near she'd scatter herself."

"I should think she would get used to your coming and not be afraid," said Dorothy.

"It isn't that," replied the kangaroo. "They're not a bit afraid, when they're put together, and usually they're very jolly and pleasant. It's just a habit they have, to scatter themselves, and if they didn't do it they wouldn't be Fuddles."

The travelers thought upon this quite seriously for a time, while the Sawhorse continued to carry them rapidly forward. Then Aunt Em remarked: "I don't see much use our visitin' these Fuddles. If we find them scattered, all we can do is sweep 'em up, and then go about our business."

"Oh, I b'lieve we'd better go on," replied Dorothy. "I'm getting hungry, and we must try to get some luncheon at Fuddlecumjig. Perhaps the food won't be scattered as badly as the people."

"You'll find plenty to eat there," declared the kangaroo, hopping along in big bounds because the Sawhorse was going so fast; "and they have a fine cook, too, if you can manage to put him together. There's the town now—just ahead of us!"

They looked ahead and saw a group of very pretty houses standing in a green field a little apart from the main road.

"Some Munchkins came here a few days ago a matched a lot of people together," said the kangaroo. "I think they are together yet, and if you go softly, without making any noise, perhaps they won't scatter."

"Let's try it," suggested the Wizard.

So they stopped the Sawhorse and got out of the wagon and, after bidding good-bye to the kangaroo, who hopped away home, they entered the field and very cautiously approached the group of houses.

"I'm a crazy confused cowering kind of a creature," declared the kangaroo, stopping short on her door-step, "too conscientious by half." She drummed with her left foot impatiently. "Why in the world did I come hopping home now just because that girl said so? She can't know what my priorities are! What am I supposed to do at home? I can't find my mittens here. They're lost—on the road! At least, I'm sure I had them with me when I started out this morning. Or did I? I remember thinking it was a little overcast and the danger not so great today. And yet! I never stir out of the house without them."

The kangaroo lived in a house, not at all a traditional thing for kangaroos to do. Normally they just bed down in a gum thicket for a few hours, then leap on their merry way. Their children, tender things, have their traveling home with them, of course, until they are old enough to throw off a home forever.

"Why have I even got a home, let alone a house?" pondered the animal. "Just because that girl assumed I did? But no, that's silly. I had this house before I ever dreamed of her."

Yet the kangaroo remained pensive, trying to think just why she did have a house. "I've always lived here," she remembered, "—at least as far back as I know anything of. And why *shouldn't* I live here—if I choose!" She retreated off the wooden stoop and surveyed the structure: tall and narrow, close in amongst, indeed immediately confined by, a copse of narrow and tall eucalyptus trees. "It suits me!" she cried, and admired the four stories, the brown-red paint job covering what she knew to be mellow smooth soapy wood like a sort of harder balsa, with its central spiral ramp for easy access, and a plethora of holes in the walls for extruding her tail, which was quite as long as she was tall and got in the way when she was house-keeping.

"I like it here! And I'll stay!" she declared. "And yet—oh, how shall I speak it? I must be torn from it. I *must* have mittens,

the old ones or new, and I should have gone to Grandma Gnit immediately, right along of that girl and her funny old companions, and not come hopping home crest-fallen because she proposed it.

"Never mind," she said to herself, taking fresh courage, or at least determination. "I'll just get dinner for the children and then I'll be on my way back to Fuddlecumjig. "Plonch!" she cried. "Zelix! Tronto! Meluel! Ophrid!... Where are you all? Pesky things." The caring mother kangaroo's own name was Mar, spelled with two Rs or sometimes with one.

She was but half an hour in preparing curried kedgeree with quince conserves. By that time the youngsters had turned up, bored and discontented with all things, as youth traditionally is. During the meal each was simultaneously busy with his own affair. Zelix was stringing a lute, Tronto was pucking a boiled cat, Ophrid studied a volume of plainsong chants, while Meluel and Plonch played five-dimensional chess. Mar looked on.

Then she shooed them out of doors, or upstairs, as the case might be, and set out herself the two and a quarter miles to the town of the Fuddles, keeping her paws stuffed in her pouch the while for greater protection. After so many confinements, her pouch was capacious, not to say baggy, and no trouble to keep paws in jauntily as one jaunted along.

"At any rate," the kangaroo consoled herself, "I'm not cap-tious, calculating, or callous. Neither am I cranky, conceited, carnivorous, or criminal. I like to think I'm not conniving either." But her countenance clouded over. "Let's face it. I could be calmer, more complacent. And oh! to be more canny, cautious, and capable!"

The travelers—well, to be quite candid we should say “tourists,” though the word, alas, is already getting a disagreeable flavor—the tourists slept well, as usual, in their tents that night, after their day’s adventures. All except one of them. That was the curiously designated “Shaggy Man.” He was shaggy all right, but there was more to him than that. He ought to have had a name of his own.

Shag (we’ll call him so; we can’t keep saying “the Shaggy Man” hundreds of times without sounding precious): Shag couldn’t sleep because of a kangaroo. The encounter with the antipodean animal had brought on in him sharp pangs of nostalgia. How vividly were now brought back all his adventures in Australia. From there, after a while, his mind went on to other recollections, and he lay all night going over his past life. He had rich memories, but he also had regrets. He’d been footloose, a wanderer, a “knight of the road,” but also let us be fair; a tramp, a hobo, with all the notable characteristics of your hobo.

Take his shags, for instance. “Shaggy” heads (no more of the man was ever revealed in print, so we have no information on how shaggy he was below his neck) are heads that hardly know a comb or scissors. In other words, they are sloppy and unkempt. If hair and beard were sometimes trimmed, a man might still be noticeably hirsute, yet he wouldn’t be “shaggy.”

Then clothes. Shaggy clothes are ones that are in tatters. Self-respecting gentlemen of the road didn’t get that way. Patched but clean. Unpatched isn’t much better than out and out dingy. Shags can’t be washed; they tend to fall off during scrubbing. The least burdened tramp can keep a needle and thread behind his lapel.

If Shag was as tattered and unkempt as a hobo and wanted nothing better than that (even when all dolled up in the Emerald City he wore artificial shags in both hair and clothes), he may have shared other recurring traits of such people. He did. He carried no luggage, not even a bandanna on a stick. He never cared much where he laid his head, or worried about reaching a desti-



nation (if he had one). He accepted whatever hospitality was offered, cheerfully and without thinking of offering anything, any service, in return. And he was sticky-fingered.

An example of this last is how he'd once stolen a love magnet from a young lady in Butterfield, Kansas. It was a naughty thing to do but, tramp-like, the Shaggy Man didn't let it bother him. He reasoned in one of the ways much folks do: either they don't think about the after-effects of their pilfering at all, or else they persuade themselves that their victims are just as well off as before their loss. Shag did the latter.

He liked to think that the young lady never missed her magnet. The young lady's name was Penelope Thacker. (Her neighbors, knowing no better, called her "Penny-loap," as who would say [who wouldn't?] "cally-cap," "hyper-bowl," "sin-droam.") Penelope's dad was a magnet maker. Indeed, Butterfield was known as the magnet capital of the Central Midwest. But he wasn't a magician. How does it happen then that he could make a magnet that would magically and ineluctibly draw to the bearer of it the true love of whatever looked upon him?

It came about in this way. There's a little magic in dying. Not a very great deal and certainly not altogether pleasant, but it's magic right enough. The state of affairs that something that could propel itself about the earth where it willed and *by* its will should suddenly and totally lose that ability: that's magic. This is a thing rare in nature: that an entity wholly replete with a certain characteristic should, in a stroke, completely lose that characteristic. What is magic (at least, one form of magic) but that?

Mr. Thacker died in the following way: he was at work with his magnetmaker, "stroking" all into one direction the ions in a newly forged magnet the size of a playing card, when a bandit (common in Kansas in the period; maybe it was one of the Daltons?) entered the shop. He was rifling the till in the (for the moment unoccupied) sales room when he heard a sound in the rear workshop.

It was old man Thacker, patiently foot-pedaling the magnetometer and paying regrettably little attention to what was going

## THE CARELESS KANGAROO OF OZ

---

on in the public part of his store.

The bandit tiptoed, craned his neck around the door opening, took one look, and shot Thacker (like Jesse James) in the back. Then he coolly finished emptying the cash register and went on to the next stop in his rounds. He was never caught. Too bad, but there you are.

Mr. Thacker leaned quietly over his work bench, supported on his high stool, and spilt his heart's blood all over the magnet in question. If that wasn't enough to impart a quality to a piece of metal, I don't know what is. The magnet thenceforth had an inexorable attraction for any and every heart that came near it.

The first one that came near it was that of the magnet-maker's daughter, Penelope. Oh, but that heart beat when it understood how another heart had stopped. Thenceforward Mr. Thacker's last magnet was inordinately valued by the young woman, who kept it always near her. She couldn't bear to wipe away the loved blood that had dried so strangely hard and lacquer-like upon it. Nor did the magnet ever after lose its deep red hue.

It was only gradually, as time went on, that Penelope realized the uncanny nature of her amulet. Surprisingly, it bothered her, at the same time that it fascinated her. What use to a charming young lady who had already won all the hearts in her little town was a magnet that won hearts?

You can be sure her fiancé was not pleased. Still, she would go on wearing it, as a dear memorial to her dad whom she had loved even more than she did her jealous swain. The latter was a watch repairman and jeweler, as well (like most businessmen in Butterfield) as a magnet-maker in a small way on the side. She had him attach a safety catch to the love magnet so she could wear it as a brooch.

Among the hearts that Penelope won in Butterfield was that of a plain (let's be honest: ugly) young man who worked as assistant to her fiancé. He had turned up in the town some months earlier, claiming to be from Colorado and an accomplished watch-maker. Despite his unprepossessing appearance: great goggle eyes, broad flattened nose, and wide negroid mouth, the jeweler hired

him. It took a few days to ascertain that the new employee knew nothing about watches but in the same few days the intelligent Coloradan had picked up a good deal by observing his boss at work. He proved himself useful enough to be kept on.

Of course the newcomer had soon made the acquaintance of Miss Penelope Thacker. Girls of that age meant nothing to him but he could not deny that she was a very charming fiancée for his employer. Then came the awful day of the hit-and-run murder. The Coloradan actually saw the departing killer on the street minutes after the crime, but only realized it too late.

It was a week later that the jeweler showed his workman the dull-shiny magnet and asked him to heat the soldering iron. Thereafter the Coloradan (we still don't know what his name was) often saw the girl about town wearing her brooch, and his indifference straightway flamed to passion.

That led to the break-up of his career in Butterfield, of course. When he began openly to court the jeweler's lady friend, the jeweler (more deeply than ever in love with Penelope, like, by now, everyone else in Butterfield) asked him not to remain at his shop any longer or indeed even in the town.

Sadly, the Coloradan went for a last interview with the girl of his dreams. Over tea they talked of the strangeness of her new ornament.

"It must be the magnet brooch," Penelope reasoned. "Of course people seemed to like me before. Then everyone showed greater kindness and tenderness than ever when Dad died. But I realize now it was only after I began to wear the brooch that total strangers would walk up to me and declare their love. Take yourself—and the Breech twins, both of them—and the Hoag family, all fifteen, men, women, and children! It's not natural. And though it's lovely to be liked, I really don't need eight fiancés."

The poor suitor from Colorado realized it was his congé. Immediately his true heart was torn with altruism. As a last service to his lady he would relieve her of the troublesome amulet.

But then she spoke again: "Of course I could never part with the magnet. Oh, it would break my heart! That's my darling father's

## THE CARELESS KANGAROO OF OZ

---

blood on it; all I have left of him. I shall wear it next to my heart 'til I die."

'Oh, no, you won't,' thought the dismissed suitor and his true heart was torn with greed. He suddenly realized it was the magnet, he wanted, not the girl.

That very night he entered the Thacker residence with a bit of chloroform, went to Penelope's room, and had his way with her brooch.

The next day, miles away, he let his beard grow, the better to throw pursuers off the trail.

Ever since, it had grown and grown, getting shaggier and shaggier.

It was at-home day on Cloud Nine. The Rainbow had said, "Let it be! The earth doesn't have to have a rainbow *every* time it rains. In ninety-nine cases out of a hundred it doesn't anyway. We'll just be cozy here at home today."

"Oh, grand," said Alouette, his daughter. "Shall we have people in? seeing we're having an at-home."

"Why not? Whom did you have in mind?"

"I thought it would be nice if Grandmother Spray and Grandad Sol could come."

"Both of them?" asked Dad Rainbow. "You know what happens whenever those two get together. I wouldn't have much of a holiday. I'd have to be out there doing the splits and bends the whole time."

"Of course," said his daughter Prism. "Let's just have one of them. What about Grandad?"

The Rainbow looked upward with a smile. "He's already invited himself, you see," and he pointed with blue into the meridional sky.

"Oh, Dad," pleaded Lucy, "can't Mother come? We so rarely get to be with her, close up."

The Rainbow looked soberly down at Mother Earth. "She's always there, to be counted on when you need her. But she's so big. She can't really 'go' anywhere—except on her yearly round through space. When I meet her it's just fleetingly: a touch of a finger or a toe."

Daughter Arcenciel looked sceptical. "Really, Dad? Then where did we come from? You've always said Earth was our mother, and that's the reason we've got any substance at all."

Of course Daddy Rainbow had told the story lots of times, but the girls loved to hear it again and while Polychrome wrote the invitations he related it once more.

"You girls are Africans," he said. That always got a laugh. The maidens would look at each other trying to see any hints of a dark tint but though they were (naturally) every color of the rain-

## THE CARELESS KANGAROO OF OZ

---

bow none of them were brown or black. (Just so those two colors wouldn't feel left out Poly and several of the others always wore a little dark skull-cap.)

"It was a long time ago," said the Rainbow iridescently. At home he was just a confused mass of colors. Even the girls couldn't tell head or tail of him. But his presence warmed them.

"Thousands of years," put in Polychrome solemnly and wiped a tear from her cheek.

"That's right. Not to say millions. There was the most frightful earthquake and a great fissure opened in the earth: hundreds of yards deep at its ultimate roots. That was not so unusual—in the whole history of the planet—but what was unusual, even almost unique, was that the crack lay square across the course of a mighty river a mile wide. When the dust cleared it was seen (by any wandering animal that might have been in the vicinity) that the river now crashed four-square into the great new ravine, while its former lower course had become merely dry ground.

"The spray that boiled up half a mile high was the natural home of rainbows. I rushed to the spot and arc'ed down into the great orifice, doing my duty. As it happened, it was a morning of fine weather so I was stuck there all day, 'til blessed evening came and my sister Moonbow could relieve me on duty.

"Some months later, when the rainy season ended and sunshine made my presence again necessary on the Zambezi, what was my amazement when I arrived to hear a voice calling, 'Father! Father!' and I saw a little girl standing on the brink of the falls and waving to me. It was Pluvial, the eldest of my children," and here he patted benevolently the hand of the maturest-appearing of the crowd of rain maidens.

"A number of times after that," Dad Rainbow went on, "the same thing happened—"

"Twenty in all," put in Arcenciel.

"That's right; there are twenty of you, aren't there?" agreed the old bow genially.

"Why didn't you have any boys, Daddy?" asked Lucy.

"That's a good question, my dear," said her parent. "I think I

used to ask myself that—thousands of years ago. But now it's been so long, I've just got used to it and it merely seems natural that the rainbow should have only daughters."

"Maybe," offered the slightly more worldly-wise Arcobaleno, "it's so we wouldn't always be reminded of boys—and grieve because we can never marry."

At this there was a loud sob from Polychrome, who flung down her pen and buried her face in her arms. The others all looked at each other speechless. "What in the sky—!" cried Father Rainbow, and her sisters all rushed to surround the weeping girl.

"Why, she's heart-broken!"

"What ever for?"

"She *has* been acting down in the dumps for weeks."

"Months!"

"Seems like a year to me."

"I've caught her crying before."

"Have you? When was that?"

"Did she say why?"

"I know something!"

"Well, tell us."

"I think we all know something."

"What?"

"It's ever since she had that accidental stay on earth."

"That's right! She's never been the same since then."

"What do you suppose could have happened?"

"I think she met someone."

"Naturally she must have met *somebody*."

"She means somebody special."

"Oh, Poly, do tell us *who*!"

The worst of Polychrome's crying jag passed while her sisters spoke. Now she raised her haggard face, her eyes great opalescent pools, and took the hand of her favorite sister Aquarelle. "Oh, I love him so much! I can't live without him!" she gasped, and fell to sobbing again worse than ever.

It was half an hour or so before they could get a coherent story out of her. By then Aurora had discarded the invitations. They

## THE CARELESS KANGAROO OF OZ

---

would not be having anyone in to their at-home. The domestic crisis took priority.

The story the lovely rain maiden eventually told was that on her journey on earth, before she could get back to her home in the sky, she had met a certain man.

"What was his name?" said Farvespil.

The others had called him "the Shaggy Man" but he didn't seem to have any regular name of his own. Poly herself just called him "the Man."

"What was he like?" asked Iris. "I suppose he was terribly handsome."

Polychrome described the Shaggy Man exactly as he was. The others looked non-plussed.

"But, Poly dear," said Arcobaleno, "how did you happen to love *such* a man? He sounds a bit grim to me. You who are all light! a being of air and rain, of color and grace, to love a tangle-haired fellow all in rags, who doesn't sound as if he ever took a bath..."

But her sister could reassure them on that point she knew for a fact that the Shaggy Man had bathed in a perfumed tub at the end of their travels together. And as for why she loved him: it was because he carried a Love Magnet and no one meeting him could do anything else.

"Oh, it's mechanical," pooh-poohed Opal. "It's just a magic spell. You don't really love *him*: you're just bewitched!"

That didn't make any difference to Polychrome. The feeling was just as violent, no matter its origins. She knew she couldn't be happy until she had seen him again.

"But what good would that do?" protested Aquarelle, who was feeling a bit jealous. "You could never marry. There are just so many things separating you. He's a mortal, and you don't share any of the same interests, and I doubt very much if he could walk on air, not to mention living in the sky."

But in her present state of mind Polychrome was prepared to desert her rainbow home and live always on earth just to be near her dear Shaggy Man. She only had one reservation



"What's that, dear?" asked Regenvlaag. "That you know nothing about his family?"

As it happened, the rainbow's traveling daughter, did know something about the Man's family. During their wanderings together he had related facts about his home life in distant days before he took to the road. His father had been a miner, forty-niner, prospecting for whatever precious metals might turn up in the western American territories. His luck was not good but no worse than that he could afford to marry, and because the saloon-keeper's daughter he wedded lived in Colorado he settled down there.

Other than a daughter, Clementine, the future Shaggy Man was their eldest child. Curiously, he was not a shaggy boy. His mother, who had a driving yen for respectability (it came on her just *after* her marriage to the feckless prospector), also suffered from a cleanliness mania and insisted on keeping her children scrubbed and clipped to within an inch of their lives. Such childhood influences often leave their marks the child makes it an ideal to feel and do exactly the opposite.

"Anyway," laughed Lucy, "he knows what water *is*."

Poly was able to confirm that. It seemed the Shaggy Man had demonstrated it on their journey. The poor man fell into a Truth Pond—and didn't drown! He showed himself to be a capable swimmer.

"Well, then," wondered Prism, "what's the 'reservation' you have about him?"

It turned out that the Man was too young for Polychrome!

"Too young?!" exclaimed Pluvia, who knew what it was like to be eldest. "I thought you said he was sixty."

With all that white hair and beard the Shaggy Man actually looked seventy but Polychrome could reveal that the man of her dreams had said he was in fact no older than fifty. His muscular athleticism gave the lie to his premature de-coloring.

"Where do you come up with 'sixty' then?" enquired Vattenande.

That was just Polychrome's own private reckoning. When she

## THE CARELESS KANGAROO OF OZ

---

herself was thousands of years old (without looking it in the least) she didn't want her swain to be a mere child. Even so, the discrepancy was glaring: one of them heavy with age, in fact, but looking and acting like a mere child; the other a mere child by comparison but looking and acting venerable with age.

"Is there no way around it?" asked Naiad confidentially.

All poor Polychrome could think of was to try to accumulate some learning and wisdom so as to seem spiritually (though she could never really look) a little older.

"But, darling," protested Tien Kang, "are you sure that's indicated? Perhaps he loves you just as you are: so young (looking) and lovely."

At that Poly burst into tears again.

"Whatever's the trouble now?" said Raduga with a no-nonsense air.

Then the lovelorn maiden had to confess that she hadn't the faintest idea that the Shaggy Man loved *her*.

"Good heavens!" cried Alouette, "I made sure it was a *reciprocal* affair! How could he help but love you?"

The lovesick girl now was forced to the painful confession that all the falling in love had been on her side. The Man never spoke of women—aside from the one he'd victimized in Kansas. Polychrome had got the idea that he was indifferent—not inimical just quite indifferent to grown women.

"But what a dreadful thing!" cried Sateenkaari. "Not to care about ladies!"

It wasn't only ladies, it seemed. The Shaggy Man had given the impression of being good-naturedly casual about all human relationships. Though he was light-fingered, the man's career as a thief had collided with that as a hobo, and the latter had prevailed. It was no good having a yen for possessions when you wanted to be mobile on the road. The Shaggy Man gave preference to being "lightbacked" over being light-fingered. And if you couldn't afford to collect things you couldn't collect people either, and so better to avoid caring too much about them, the wanderer had stated candidly.

"So what are you going to do now?" wondered Arcenciel.

Thoughtfully Polychrome described her plan. There was just a ray of hope in the fact that the shaggy one's own life style had altered drastically at the end of the pair's adventures (if you could call them that) together. He was now decked out in silks and satin, even his shags were artificial, and he was set (by Royal ordinance, no less) to living a sedentary life in a palace.

"How will that change things?" asked Curcubeu.

Her sister explained how now, in his boredom and inactivity, the Shaggy Man would have ample opportunity to collect people, if he should be so inclined. She would arrange to place herself in his way — and let nature take its course.

"Well, good luck, darling," encouraged her sister Aurora.

"Will you be going to him right away?" enquired Roong.

"Well, no," admitted Polychrome. "There's something I have to do first."

H.M Wogglebug, the noted pedant, added the distinction "T.E." (thoroughly Educated) to his name prematurely. Actually it was not until the completion of his sojourn in the United States<sup>s</sup> that the great scholar could consider himself to be, indeed, thoroughly educated.

Readers of the foot-noted works will have remarked how the insect's adventures (not to mention those of his traveling companions)\* break off almost abruptly at books' ends, with no more resolution than the almost pitiful denouement to the wogglebug's one grand passion of the heart. Left with no more of his great love than went to make up a neck-tie (which, however, he guarded always thereafter as the most precious treasure in his possession), the insect turned his back forever on romance. Thenceforth his days would be devoted to the acquisition of something safe, something nobody would try to take away from him, something no one else wanted, i.e., learning.

H.M. rode the rails to the valley of the Mississippi and with the last of his sadly diminished funds enrolled in West Kentucky Christian College; he could afford no better. Even so he had to hire himself out, to make ends meet, as a live exhibit (no dissecting allowed) in Anatomy and Zoölogy classes at the college and furthermore performed incognito at a third-rate theatre in the town which offered vaudeville turns. He had picked up some songs and a soft-shoe number during his more glamorous travels, that now stood him in good stead.

Those were jolly times among the college students in the sunshine of their happy youth. Golden days full of gaiety and full of truth. Days of youth and love. Oh, not romantic love, but love of learning. At least: it was for learning that H.M. had gone to W.K.C. But something unexpected intervened.

---

<sup>s</sup>See QUEER VISITORS FROM THE LAND OF OZ and THE THIRD BOOK OF OZ. Editor's. notes.

\*But see THE QUEER VISITORS' RETURN TO OZ.

Only in his Anatomy class, which the bug attended as student as well as performing as model for, had Wogglebug found the love of study he sought. The old instructor, a Harvard man, who had sat at the feet of O.W. Holmes himself, really valued and delighted in learning. But he seemed to be the only one on campus who did. The insect, after class, would linger in talk with the old man.

"Sir," said Highly (who now stressed his youthfulness; actually he WAS only six years old at this period; and as a youngster he thought of himself by his first name), "I came to West Kentucky to get an education, but I find to my dismay that nobody cares about such things here at the college."

"Indeed?" said Dr. Allwise. "Pray elucidate."

"Well, I mean, all they care about is sports, the boys, that is. The girls admire the fellows that go out for sports. As for studies, the girls are only interested in their art classes. Result: nobody cracks a book."

"We can assume then," said the instructor over his glasses, "that they won't be here very long. They'll fail."

"No, that's the funny part," returned the freshbug. "I learn they stay on for years and years. The more popular the sportsman the longer he remains a student, and the really top sport stars are never allowed to graduate. It would mean the collapse of the teams. And what if we were to go down to defeat before Illinois Normal?!"

"I can see the bug has got you too," laughed the teacher good-humoredly. "Oh, sorry!" he flustered, recalling whom he was addressing. "I do beg your pardon."

The insect could take that in stride. As a collegian of four months' standing he was used to ragging and knew there was nothing to be gained by seeming to mind. But the wavering of his values remained a troubling problem.

"So far in life," he said, "I've staked everything on appearing—even if modesty compels me to say, not actually being—learned. Well, all except for one short period when my attention was directed elsewhere." Highly didn't like to go in to details,

## THE CARELESS KANGAROO OF OZ

---

certainly not with *this* associate, about his passion for the Wagnerian plaid. "But I find my standards changing here. After all, I want to be popular!"

Yes, the instructor could see that. The "bug" of campus thinking had, to that extent, got to him as well.

"And nobody likes a grind," pursued the wogglebug. "No girl will date me!" he mourned. Since the affair of the plaid H.M. didn't care about girls as girls, but the extent to which they would date you was the measure of your popularity. "It's because I'm the four-eyed type."

"Four-eyed?" queried the teacher. He had noted his unusual pupil's four arms but had not so far seen four eyes.

"Yes: wear glasses," explained the bug. That was campus slang that was just coming in in 1905; it had reached the student but not yet the instructor. "Although actually I don't. However, they see me as the academic sort, and so I don't get dated." Amour propre forbade him to believe girls wouldn't go out with him because he was a bug. "I want more than anything to be dated and popular," he ended.

"Alas," said Instructor Allweise. "I suppose it is the end, then, of our pleasant relationship. You'll never get popular by being educated... Are you going out for sports then?"

"Well, I *had* thought of pole-vaulting—or track in general. My wings would come in useful there. I've even dreamed there might be a slot for me on the football team itself—as flying tackle. Actually, it's a shame there's no Intermural Flying here at W.K.C."

"Yes, there you'd be in a class by yourself," agreed the teacher amiably.

That was the end of Wogglebug's soul-searching. He went over completely to the worship of Sports as the all-highest in acadème: that and a bit of Art too, of course.

Highly had only two years at West Kentucky before being called home by his anxious sovereign, who couldn't understand where he had got to.

Already on the completion of the first adventures together of H.M. Wogglebug and his Queen, the new-crowned Ozma, the

latter had named him Public Educator to the youth of Oz. Now the girl ruler found to her chagrin that education in her native land was going to heck in a hand-cart due to the absence in foreign lands of her czar of schools.

Forced to it by the emergency, the princess had called-in the also celebrated Professor Nowitall as interim head of her Department of Public Instruction. He was after all H.M. Wogglebug's original teacher and was still known throughout the land as a most famous scholar.

Naturally a lecturer so in demand as Professor N. was not employed full-time as teacher at a one-room school-house full of inattentive and misbehaving grade-school pupils in the land of the Winkies. Nowitall had only been there for a fortnight as guest lecturer but at least one of his hearers (at *very* "least": the tiny wogglebug was only one centimeter long at the time he first "enrolled") had sucked the instruction to him like a sponge. He was well prepared to be "graduated" out of all proportion by the time he happened to crawl under the lens of the magic lantern.

Professor Nowitall and Mr. Wogglebug (he did not grant himself his own professorship until some years later) never met again before the latter's departure for the United States. Actually, after the bloodless revolution that brought Ozma to power, and the subsequent overhauling of the forms of government in Oz, Professor Eydoant (such was the human academic's modest given name) had withdrawn from public life in some pique at not having, himself, as Oz's best-known intellectual, been invited to be chief of the new Education Department, rather than his erstwhile pupil.

But now at last came the time of his place in the sun. And yet: Nowitall's gifts were scholarly, not administrative. He early became almost as great an absentee as his colleague in America. The savant could never resist an invitation to speak at the Quadling School of Toddlers or at Gillikin Grammar. And what he *really* wanted was to get ensconced behind ivy-covered walls and do research. He had no patience with the red tape of government procedure, which, during his tenure at the Department, accumu-

## THE CARELESS KANGAROO OF OZ

---

lated to a ball seven feet in diameter. It was the principal material attraction for visitors and sight-seers at Public Instruction.

When Ozma discovered that, far from education's spreading into every nook and cranny of the magic land, centers of learning such as the Winkie Workshop, the Dainty China Academy, or the Munchkin School of Mines were being disestablished at the rate of one a week, she panicked. Hastily she summoned up an image of the wogglebug in the Magic Picture. She had occasionally observed him there—without quite knowing where “there” was. Now she set Jellia Jamb and palace-guardsman Omby Amby to watching the pictured insect round the clock until something should reveal just which was the roving Ozite's campus of choice.

It was little Jellia, Ozma's dark-green-haired (dyed; Jellia, a native of the North, actually from nature's hand had light lavender hair) maid and personal attendant, who, bleary-eyed, brought the Princess the news at five one morning. “I saw him checking books out of the college library,” (in a different time zone far away) she reported. “I could just make out the printing on the ownership stamp imprint in the back of one volume. He's at West Kentucky Christian College at Cay Why, K.Y.”

“Oh, good,” exclaimed the ruler. “I must get a message through to him at once!” Then, thoughtfully, as the little fairy stretched, leaning back against her satin pillows, “By the way, did you happen to see which works had aroused our learned friend's interest?”

“Why, yes,” said Jellia wonderingly, “he was going to read ‘Memoirs of the Fifty-Yard Line’ and ‘That Winning Streak’.”



Eureka, the White Kitten, was furious. She stamped her foot in a rage—but being a cat’s foot it made no sound and by no means expressed its owner’s dissatisfaction. So she stamped two feet together. No better! The poor creature found she was unable to stamp three feet at once. But four... Yes: by leaping into the air she could come down on all fours. She knotted her feet into fists as she descended. But alack! that only bruised her knuckles when she landed and it didn’t sound any more like a stamp than the same action performed with fewer limbs.

The cat, who possessed her share of sullen dignity, stopped her gyrations. What if someone came in and saw her leaping up and down in a frenzy? She laughed bitterly. No one was going to come in. That was just it. The farmhouse had been deserted for a week. She was mistress of all she surveyed, and that was precious little; a two-story unpainted cottage on the Kansas plain, with absolutely nothing in it that could entertain a kitten.

Well, there WAS the old woman Emma’s ball of pin yarn and the only-just-began sock (or was it a scarf?) that she had left lying when she suddenly vanished from her home. But Eureka had already pulled and batted the ball all around the room until it lay, completely de-balled and in one mad tangle, about the floor, nearly concealing it. There was no fun left there.

Yes, Em had vanished, and not figuratively; literally. The cat had been lying on a chair, idly purring and casually looking at her mistress when the disappearance took place. Hence, she knew it was not as ordinary case of mislaying a person, nor yet of her being strayed or stolen. Well, “stolen” perhaps! but not by anybody in the mundane real world.

Eureka had enough experience of magic lands to know that what had happened to Mrs. Emma was, an enchantment. That led her on naturally to suppose that Oz had something to do with it. Yes, surely it did; what convinced her even more was the equally unexplained disappearance of the cat’s real owner (insofar as any cat, reflected Eureka, can be said to be “owned”) a few days

## THE CARELESS KANGAROO OF OZ

---

previously. Her owner and that owner's own owned dog, Toto.

That was what really made Eureka hopping mad. Dorothy had gone to Oz *again* with that wretched cur. It was devastating to the kitten's amour propre (cats, as well as wobblebugs, had that and much more so) to think that a dog was valued above her. Well, admittedly Dorothy had had the dog longer and in fairness Eureka had to allow that old things might possess a familiarity value and thus make a claim on affection. Dorothy and Toto had been together for eight years that the kitten knew of (and indeed perhaps longer) before the girl and the kitten met in Australia.

But afterwards! Eureka assumed she would naturally reign supreme in her young mistress' heart even after their return together (for the second time) to the United States and to the Kansas farm, where, it is true, the cat had heard rumors that a curly black dog lurked.

The meeting of Eureka and Toto was historic (although not hitherto recorded). The two hated each other on sight. Toto had been feeling aggrieved ever since his beloved Dorothy had gone off to Australia without him. He adopted a don't-care attitude but old Em, the only one of the human family remaining on the farm at that period, could see how he drooped. What was his indignation when he understood, through overheard conversations of Em with neighbors, that Dorothy had gone on to have not just one but *two* books' worth of adventures in Oz without him.

Toto was not touched by any awareness that readers found it a relief not to have him, for the space of two whole books, rushing out to attack mice, beetles, chickens, rabbits, and even lions which one might have liked to hear more of but for his ill-timed interventions. Though he never did anything charming or ever said anything memorable (or at all!), the dog supposed his mistress' stated devotion to him remained total. (That, in fact, was how he got his name, which signifies "all" or "entirety".)

What was his fury then to find himself expected to welcome home, after nearly a year's absence, a Dorothy who clasped in her arms an insolent white creature that glanced down at him coolly through supercilious blue eyes and then turned away

her head in boredom.

Toto scarcely allowed his ears to be tousled by the returning girl before he dashed away in hot pursuit of the kitten, who ran up a tree and then with all claws clinging gazed down at him in perfect safety and utmost hatred. From that day it was total and unrelenting war between the two.

Eureka, if she had permitted herself to be quite impartial, would have admitted that it was natural that Dot's next adventure should have had Toto as participant, starting as it did by the girl's walking unsuspectingly down the road. Cats are not celebrated as walking companions, while dogs are. (Let be that Toto started off on that journey in somebody's pocket, not self-propelled.) But there was absolutely no reason why her mistress should have gone off the following and *final* time without, as far as Eureka could determine, giving her cat the slightest thought.

Now it was the turn of the kitten (only by courtesy so called; after two years in a non-fairyland—and that is what Eureka had passed—every kitten is a cat, if it still survives) to droop, and of Em and Henry both to observe it. "Look at that, Em," said the farmer, "Dorothy's gone again—and the cat notices it."

"Yep, she's gone right off her feed," concurred the goodwife, "and mostly just lies on the girl's, bed, *not* purring."

"I'm surprised," said Henry. "I always thought she was a kinda' superior-actin' animal that didn't seem to care a thing about anybody—except for despisin' Toto."

"She showed good sense there," sniffed Em; "tiresome yappy thing." Dorothy's aunt had not been fond of the dog ever since he had been the cause of her niece's being carried off in a storm in the first place, with all the troubles and long dreary absences by the girl which that had brought in its train. "If I were going to Oz, I'd sooner have the cat with me. It at least, so Dorothy says, had a word to say for itself when need arose."

But the aunt grew thoughtful. "Or better yet, that yellow chicken Dorothy told about. It had more sense than most people. Too bad the girl didn't bring that home with her, instead of a yappy dog or a stuck-up cat." Emma liked chickens; after all, she had

## THE CARELESS KANGAROO OF OZ

---

raised them for nearly forty years, ever since her girlhood and even in the surroundings of a town, and she knew the likes of leghorns and the habits of hamburgs.

Alas, when Em came to be snatched away, all untimely and unknowing, from the kitchen sink to Oz, she had no opportunity to select any pet to take with her. Nor did anyone else, in Kansas or Oz, give a thought to the destiny of the cat. Perhaps Princess Ozma may fleetingly have recalled her favorite's favorite but remembering, too, the disagreeable impression the kitten had made on her first visit to Oz, she did not include her in the spell that whisked the elderly farm couple away to the magic land.

And now Eureka was stamping mad, and bored, and also hungry. She, the pampered associate of princesses and magicians, was reduced, for her supper, to chasing mice, which had now boldly invaded the farmhouse. They were tasty enough but it offended the cat's dignity thus to have to engage in "trade." Hunting was respectable work, when you didn't *have* to do it, but when you did it was *declassée*.

Her exercise of stamping concluded, she jumped up on Dorothy's bed and stretched herself out on the pillow. She had now furiously to think. What was she going to do?

So far, she had been left in possession at the farm. Though having returned, much against her impulses, to speechlessness in America, the cat had not forgotten how to understand the language she had handled so capably, even subtly, in other, magic lands. She had caught every word the farm people had uttered in her presence. She very well knew about the missed payments and the looming foreclosure on the mortgage. Any day now the men from the bank would be turning up to see why they hadn't heard from farmer Henry. Eureka wasn't going to wait around and suffer the indignity of being turned off the place.

But where could she go?

Here the proud, self-confident cat, in the privacy of her own house, far from any observing eye, gave way to hurt feelings and, if cats could cry, would have had to wipe abundant tears from her eyes. No one wanted her. No one loved her well enough to take

her with them when they disappeared forever. For now, on the ninth day, Eureka knew it was forever.

Dorothy's absences in Oz had rarely lasted longer than ten days. And never before had her relatives followed her there. It all added up: Dorothy's ever-growing fascination with the magic land, her aunt and uncle's gradual grudging acceptance of the importance of Oz to the young girl (well, not *so* young any more—Dorothy was now sixteen, by anybody's reckoning), and the ever further deteriorating circumstances at the farm. It was a natural: they would all decamp to Oz and live happily ever after.

Only for Eureka was there no place in Oz.

Damn it! there was *going* to be a place in Oz for her. The cat knew perfectly well where she was going. She leapt lightly off the bed and out the window. She left the farmhouse without a backward glance.

Hoppity floppety thop.

The Old Guard thundered down to the sunken road. So much the cultured kangaroo knew from her reading. She liked to think, when she really hit her stride, that the thumping of her feet along the highway resembled more than somewhat the horse-clatter boom of the Old Guard on their way to the relief of Napoleon.

As she flew along she still had time to think, "Mittens, nittens, pittens, quittens, rittens, sittens, tittens, vittens, wittens, yittens, zittens—" There must be a rhyme for "mittens" but if there was one she hadn't come on it yet. Meanwhile, what were all these other things? for the kangaroo was one of your people who think that every word has a meaning. "Nitten", for instance, was a word. Just by pronouncing it you made it so. And having been pronounced and born, "nitten" must at once acquire a meaning. "The mixture may be enriched with a teaspoon of nitten." "The travelers were attacked by a whooping gang of nittens." "Nittens covered the walls and ceiling." Or perhaps "She nittened too much and it injured her health."

That thought led Mar off on a side-track. No, no, it must be "She knitted too much—" or, dear me, was it "gnitted"? She must be careful now, she was getting confused. People did sometimes call her the Confused Kangaroo of Oz; she didn't want the name to stick. And even if "knit/gnit" were different words, that didn't stop "nitten" from being a word on its own.

Actually it *was* a word. It meant "nineteen" in Danish but the kangaroo wasn't to know that. She spoke only Ozish, which is the same as English.

They only received a pittens at the sale of their property. Even so, they had to write out a quittens. And when it was ritten, 'stead o' flitten, they'd be sitten next to her— They *were* words! Well, one had to fudge a bit on the spelling, but the sounds were all right and it was the sounds which were language, when you came right down to it. The first original word came from a mouth, not a pen.

Such cogitations fully occupied the kangaroo's mind the two

and a quarter miles it took her to flash along the road from her home to Fuddlecumjig. There a scene of total chaos met her eyes.

True, a task force of Gillikins, Munchkins, and Winkies who were staying in the neighborhood had been hurriedly called in by one of the Fuddles (the cook), who, observing that he was the last citizen left whole, had pressed the Panic Button just before he too shivered into shards. The Ozites were hard at work reconstructing people and by nightfall perhaps the scene of wild disorder would once more be one of tidy collectedness.

The visit of the party from the Emerald City (including *royalty*) had been just too much for the equanimity of the Fuddles. When the red wagon rolled away with its famous freight the citizens of Fuddlecumjig to a man had dissolved once more in pieces. Unlike most people, they found they could think more clearly, digest their experiences better, when they pulled themselves apart, rather than together.

After her first momentary aback-takenness Mar too pitched in with a will at putting people together. She could get no further in her quest for mittens until Grandmother Gnit was back in one piece and fully functional. The puzzle-solvers had already so far progressed by the time the kangaroo arrived that within a quarter of a further hour Gnathan the cook (always easy to identify by his all-white costume) was back together, and then he could direct the others in the best deployment of their labors.

"Cook, cook!" cried the kangaroo. "Be quick! tell me where Grandma Gnit was when she went to pieces. I have to work on her first thing."

Gnathan put jaw in hand. "Let me see. I wasn't with Grandmother when the end came. But at that time of an afternoon she's usually in her gnot garden. I'd look there."

With murmured thanks Mar leapt away. She knew the garden well enough: a little plot of ground on the northeast edge of the village where old lady Gnit grew granny's-knots. And sure enough there were the grey pieces that stemmed from Grandmother's old-fashioned full-skirted gown. Mar squatted back on her tail and began to reconstruct the dame.

## THE CARELESS KANGAROO OF OZ

---

In just under twenty minutes the job was done. That is to say; almost. During the latter stages of the job she and Mrs. Gnit had been able to chat and laugh together, and when her extremities were fully reassembled Grandmother could even help in the search for still missing pieces of herself. It was she who found her left collar bone and both her skirt pockets. When together the two females reached under a thriving shrub of queen Anne's lace and picked up her jaw piece, the talk flowed like wine only to end in a frightening announcement by the old lady herself.

"I've lost my mind!"

"Oh, no, Mrs. Gnit, say it isn't so," gasped the kangaroo.

"But it *is* so. See, we've looked everywhere. This piece from the back of my head and topknot with just a scrap of my moboap—isn't in the garden anywhere. *You* see that. We've looked."

"But can you be sure? What about in the street or one of the houses?"

"I assure you, I was all there when I came out into the garden. I was gneeling on that little gnoll with my gnuckles in the earth, gnifing up some gnapweed when the urge came. I *gnow* my missing piece is in this garden!"

"We'll look some more then," sighed the kangaroo. "It's clear you won't be able to do me any new mittens without the use of your mind."

"Yes, I'll make you some mittens—when I find that piece. I promised that girl I would."

Mar grinned. "Anyway, there's nothing the matter with your memory, Grandmother! But that girl; I suppose you mean the young lady in the red wagon that was headed this way? Good for her! She hinted she might ask you to do me a new pair."

"Yes, she did. And as soon as lunch was over I came out into the garden to gather some gnitting cotton. But that's as far as I got."

"Hm," said the kangaroo, intrigued by the mystery. "That would be immediately before the party left Fuddlecumjig, wouldn't it? The cook said you all scattered as soon as the visitors left."



"That gnave! What does he know about it? And no, as a matter of fact: the party were still lingering over the lunch table when I left them. I remember that same cook was describing what dishes he could offer them if they ever called here again."

"What made you scatter then?"

"I don't know; the need just took me," declared Mrs. Gnit. Then she stopped in her tracks: the pair had given up the vain search and had just opened the gate to the street. "That's not right! I do know. Something startled me. That's why I scattered."

"What was it?"

"The sound of this gate latch! At my back. Someone was coming."

"Who was it?"

"How should I know? I tell you my back was turned. I never looked before I flew into a hundred pieces."

"How unfortunate," Mar deplored. "All we can do now is consult with the others. They may know something."

"Who, for instance?" demanded Dame Gnit suspiciously. "I was alone here. Who else could know anything?"

"Whoever opened the gate," said the kangaroo rather obviously. "But say 'advise' then. We might go to the Lord High Chigglewitz and get his advice. His word carries weight."

"You think so?" grunted Grandma, stumping along. "I'd say rather, his weight carries words." She sniffed in derision of the town elder, who was both plump and loquacious.

"I wish it did," mused Mar. "He might supply something else I've been looking for."

"What's that?" said Mrs. Gnit.

"A rhyme for 'mitten'."

"'Kitten'," snapped Grandmother.

The Shaggy Man tossed and turned. He *really* wasn't getting any sleep. And in the morning he was bleary-eyed and more sparing of speech than ever. He was glad he didn't see that pesky kangaroo again and get to remembering all over. For the nonce he dismissed the memory of what he'd done in Butterfield by telling himself as usual that now Penelope was loved plenty by one man and that ought to be enough for her—or anybody.

Anyway, there were other preoccupations. When the others got up that morning the star of their expedition, young Dorothy, had disappeared. That was a worry to drive all other thoughts from the Shaggy Man's head. What was the (possible) sorrow of a girl far away in Kansas compared to the (possible) danger of a girl far away from Kansas but close to his heart? Shag left his fellow travelers without even thinking of breakfast and spent the day beating the bushes in the vicinity of their camp.

To no avail. He and the soldier were gathering firewood that evening when Dorothy wandered in nonchalantly. The Shaggy Man's heart was too full. All he could say was "You've been playing hide and seek all day." After that he was silent.

Next day was better. Shag took a modest part in conversation as before, making a single comment as they tried to find the road to Rigmarole, and remarking again afterwards as they left it. But in the further adventures of the tourist party he was just one of the crowd.

Nor did he play any heroic part in the defense of his new home city, the Emerald, against the incursion of the Nome King and his cohorts. Indeed, he played no part at all, merely turning up with the others that dawn when the invading hordes were expected to devastate Oz.

It was the Scarecrow and the Tin Woodman who took the lead in resisting the invaders. However, after they had got the Nome King safely into the Forbidden Fountain of Forgetfulness, Shag did reach over abstractedly and pull him out when the malefactor had swallowed sufficiently to forget his evil

enterprise. Afterwards the Shaggy Man uttered the platitudes "I think it's a finer thing to have made them into better people than to have saved Oz."

That was his last word on the subject and his last for that adventure. But as it happened *his* (own, private) adventures were only (re)beginning. Queen Ozma, at Glinda's palace, had just said Thanks to the sorceress for all she'd done (i.e., made Oz invisible and thus unreachable by enemies from the outside world) when the Shaggy Man came to her, hat in hand, and asked for an interview.

"Of course, Shaggy," answered she. Ozma took Glinda's hand again. "May we use your laboratory—or some other room apart? The Shaggy Man and I want to have conference."

Glinda said "Of course" also and sent the Minute Maid to set chairs and a table, complete with snacks and a carafe of lacasa (the house drink at the Pink Palace), in a cozy corner of her Scarlet Salon. From there they had a view beyond the crimson drapes of the long reflecting pools and ruby-sparkling fountains (so different from that which had saved the fate of Oz yesterday).

The Shaggy Man was silent and Ozma, after filling his glass, looked at him quizzically.

Then he got it out. "I thought I better speak to you right away, your highness," he began formally. "Now, before they lower this veil of invisibility over Oz—"

"'After', you mean," said Ozma with a smile. "As I understand from our dear Sorceress just now, the veil has already descended."

"Oh, gosh." The Shaggy Man rolled his eyes, minstrel-show-fashion. "Couldn't they—she—well, you—lift a flap of it, just for a minute, so I could get out?"

"'Out', Shaggy? You mean you want to leave Oz?" Ozma was incredulous."

"Not 'leave' exactly. Just 'leave of absence' as you might say. I've got some unfinished business..."

The princess could tell by the man's solemn air that this was no light affair. But now, in the afterglow of the successful settling of the Nome King's hash (she allowed herself, in light-hearted

## THE CARELESS KANGAROO OF OZ

---

vein, to think that expression), she wanted to keep all things merry and bright, not be staid and sober again for just a while. Still, she could not ignore the man's earnestness. "Tell me about it, do."

"It was during our sight-seeing tour—you know?" began the man from Colorado. "We met this kangaroo. It was quite a creature, crouching by a corral, crying copiously—"

"Was that the Crazy Kangaroo of Oz?" enquired the Girl ruler, still longing for that light turn to the conversation.

"I don't know," admitted Shag, surprised; they had never thought to ask the kangaroo for its title. "It seemed more care-worn than crazy—"

"Wait a moment. I'll look in my bestiary." The queen felt in her left skirt pocket and drew out a little book. "I have it always by me. So useful, you understand, for someone who's constantly meeting people in her representative function and must remember faces and *names*."

She leafed quickly: "Ardent Aardvark, Arrogant Ape, Avid Alligator, Arrant Anteater, Brilliant Butterfly—I'd like to meet her!—or him—Baffled Buffalo, Brazen Bison, Busy Buzzard, Blue Bear—he lives in the Emerald City; at least his skin—Cautious Cougar, Comfortable Camel, Cowardly... Lion (that's not very alliterative, is it?), Crafty Kestrel, Conceited Kitten—that'll be Dorothy's pet, I'll wager—oh, good heavens!" Ozma broke off, experiencing a sudden pang. She looked up at the Shaggy Man, suddenly as grave as he, and flung the book aside.

"Dorothy's white kitten," she breathed. "How awful! I thought Glinda would have got in everyone we wanted before this happened—I mean the veil of invisibility. Dorothy will be heart-broken if she's never to see her kitten again."

The Shaggy Man felt a pang of jealousy, hearing how another stood so close in affection to the little companion of his latter-day adventures. But then he breathed easier again, recalling how Dorothy had never mentioned, in his hearing, during the whole month of her latest and final return to Oz, the pet she must have left behind in Kansas. Maybe that devotion wasn't so great after all.

"I didn't find any kangaroo, crazy or otherwise," finished off Ozma in reference to the bestiary. "It must be rather an obscure animal who's never been presented at court. But you were saying...?"

"That crying kangaroo reminded me sharply of my own time in Australia. Dorothy — and her uncle don't know this but I've been there too. In fact but that's a different story —" The man broke off as if a little confused. "Anyway, it led me in my thoughts to someone I once did a great injustice to —"

"You, Shaggy? I didn't think you could ever be unjust," said the little queen almost reproachfully.

"I'm afraid so. You know, ma'am, I wasn't any model of virtue before I was so lucky as to come to Oz. It was only here that I found how really wonderful life could be. I wanted to stay — but you yourself declared that I would only be allowed to if I 'proved to be honest and true.' Since then I've been practicing hard and I think I have managed to be — just a little honester and truer..."

"I never doubted," said Ozma loyally. "But what is your problem then?"

"It's no good just *starting* to be honest and true at the age of sixty. What about all the dishonesty of many wasted years, if the effects of it linger on? Can I live with that?"

"Why, Shaggy!" cried Ozma all aglow. "You've developed a conscience! Your strivings to be true have paid off." (Ozma did sometimes allow herself a colloquialism.) "I'm so pleased... And a fully functional conscience is all one needs."

"Not for me, your highness," demurred Shag. "Maybe my conscience is too 'fully functional'. It hurts. And if there's something I can do about it, I want to."

"Why does your conscience hurt?" asked the queen. But she was already beginning to have a shrewd idea.

"I stole something once. And then I lied about it as well. It was the Love Magnet. I know Penelope must have been broken-hearted when I took it but I kidded myself that she already had enough people loving her. Then I lied about it, right here in Oz! I said she married and was happy again. What a lie! How could I know

## THE CARELESS KANGAROO OF OZ

---

anything about that? I never hung around Butterfield after my theft. Naturally I lit out of town... She may be a lonely old maid now, for all I know."

"Oh dear, that *is* sad." Princess Ozma had now definitely given up the attempt to keep this a light frothy talk. "And you've been living a lie all this time. No wonder you couldn't be really content."

"Oh, but I was!" countered the Shaggy Man. "I was perfectly content, but for one thing, before I came to Oz. Maybe it's your fault, ma'am." Shag now took a turn at being wryly humorous. "But for you I wouldn't have developed this pesky conscience that's now spoiling everything!"

"What do you want to do then?" went on Ozma, now feeling surer and surer.

"Have back the Love Magnet; and return it—or anyway offer it—to its rightful owner."

The little queen looked grave. "The magnet has always been your property, to have—or borrow back, Shaggy Man. Remember, we only accepted it when you wanted so emphatically to get rid of it."

"That was my new-hatched conscience, crowing already, your highness," said Shag ruefully. "But now—if I may..."

"Of course. As soon as we're back at the capital. And then I suppose you'll be off to Butterfield?"

"If it can be managed at all, your grace."

"I'll speak to Glinda."

The “something” Polychrome intended to do was no little thing.

It was in fact no less than to acquire, as quickly as might be, all the knowledge, experience, and wisdom that in thousands of years of lounging around on a rainbow or dancing madly up and down it she had never felt it worth-while to collect. Perhaps it was because there were no boys in the family and the pretty rain maiden had never learned that to keep a man’s attention you have to do more than know how to arrange your hair in a charming *un*-arranged-looking style or what color to tint your toenails.

Now she had found out. The Shaggy Man, after winning Polychrome’s frantic affection by the use of a magnet, had paid no more attention to her than to any of the others in their travel party. Indeed less, for the Rainbow’s daughter had always felt that the Man had accorded most deference to the young Dorothy.

Jealousy did not bother Polychrome, however—at least in this case. It was naturally quite out of the question that the half-century-old Shaggy Man should have more than a kindly fatherly affection for a girl child just barely into her teens. But herself: a creature eons old, might most properly be adored by a human male at whatever age he could (reasonably) attain. It was just a case of attracting his attention.

How could she do that? She so clearly hadn’t done so, she had freely to admit, the first time around, and not through want of light conversation or unbridled dancing. The things young girls could traditionally do seemed to have no effect on him, at least not when done by her. What else was there, then?

Well, music? The shaggy one did have opinions of that topic. He had agreed with most of the others in deploring the “Musicker’s” cacophonous playing. Perhaps the Shaggy Man was musical? And hadn’t Polychrome herself on one or two occasions noticed him whistling? She made a mental notes “course in musicology.”

And then art? Granted, nothing had been spoken on that score

## THE CARELESS KANGAROO OF OZ

---

during their travels. There's so little occasion for getting out an easel and tubes when you're walking down the hard highway or rushing in a sand-boat over a burning desert. Architecture? They had all been impressed by the towers, steeples, domes, and gables on the Tin Woodman's new castle—and knew the difference between them! But had the Shaggy Man shown any particular interest? Never mind; it couldn't hurt to pick up a little extra knowledge of Art.

And philosophy. Now Polychrome was sure she was on the right track. Ever and anon the Man would come out with some little second-rate aphorism picked up on his travels. A seminar on that subject and Poly was sure she'd be able to keep up with her lover there—nay, be miles ahead of him, on a topic he cared about.

Cookery? The maiden recalled that Shag had had his pockets full of apples. He was not indifferent to food. She herself only subsisted on dewdrops and the odd cloud-cake—and once in a *very* great while a slice of roast turkey—but that was no reason why she couldn't become an expert cuisinière. She'd learn to do apples in a dozen different ways; that would win him! She jotted "cooking class."

And magic! As an immortal Polychrome—and her whole family!—they were natural candidates for becoming adepts of magic, but up until now, Poly realized, she'd neglected that part of her education too and knew no magic at all. Well, it stood to reason: she'd always lived on the rainbow or in the clouds and there Dad took care of everything. She'd never been down to earth but once and 'til then had simply had no need for or interest in magic.

That sojourn had taught her though! She found her traveling companions had been quite unable to cope without magic. Its value, indeed for the first time its *nature*, were made clear to her. Now what an impression she would be able to make on her adored if she reappeared to him as a whiz of a wizardress! The study of magic was going to rank very high in her curriculum.

But now Poly began to wonder where she was going to get all this learning. Formal study seemed to be what was wanted. As



for “experience” and “wisdom,” those only came if you lived vibrantly on earth and among people for a time, which Polychrome had to admit she’d hardly ever done. Nor was there any way of speeding up the acquisition of those commodities, yet they would come of themselves all the while you were getting a book-learning education.

Books! A library. But where was there any library Poly had access to? She could not appear in any earthly library and borrow volumes. Literally: she couldn’t “appear” there. She might *be* there all right but no one could see her. To her perplexity Polychrome had learnt that she had no more palpability than a ghost in the world of men beyond such of those as happened to be under a magic spell.

Except for one place! Oz! and the continent surrounding it. There she had been seen, and accepted, as just another, albeit delightful, person by her enchantment-protected friends. Undoubtedly, to Oz she must go for her education. Indeed, it was the only place she *could* go.

Now let’s see: an Oz library...? *What* Oz library? To Polychrome’s considerable consternation she realized she’d never heard of any such thing in Oz. An Oz denizen reading a book? There was no record of any such phenomenon in Oz history, except for certain persons’ occasional recourse to Sorceress Glinda’s Book of Records and that was not for ordinary people’s consumption. Good heavens, was the rainbow’s daughter going to have to found a library herself simply in order to get to read the books in it?

But Poly didn’t panic for long. Rummaging further in her memory she recalled a certain Mr. Wogglebug who, she was given to understand, taught in a place called the “Royal College of Oz.” A college would have a library! It had to. Furthermore, a college was exactly what Polychrome had most need of at this juncture.

“Dad! Dad!” she cried and starting to her feet dashed up the rainbow to its crest, where she held earnest conference with her parent. “Please make it rain over Oz! More specifically, right on the Munchkin side of the Emerald country!”

“Daughter, daughter,” grumbled the Rainbow right back.

## THE CARELESS KANGAROO OF OZ

---

"Whatever's this? I can't make it rain, just like that. The rain evokes *me*, not the other way around."

"Oh, Daddy darling, don't be silly. You're always in existence—since the world began... And isn't it marvelous that you are!" said the sparkling maiden, and suddenly grew thoughtful. Perhaps already she was starting to adapt to the mode of cerebration that she knew would be required of her in days to come. "I mean: it almost makes you think somebody with a sense for charm and beauty had had a hand in the creation. There didn't *have* to be a brilliant iridescent display every time sunshine strikes through water molecules. Nature could have figured it out some other way..."

"But anyway you're there," she went on, getting back to her subject. "And you've got pull with the Rain King. He wants to keep in good with you. Make him do his stuff over Oz!" Polychrome was getting *awfully* slangy in her exuberance.

"Oh, all right," gave up the Rainbow, who could refuse his most charming daughter nothing. "Where did you say? On the east side of the Emerald City?"

"Actually, I think it's down where the Emerald, Munchkin, and Quadling countries join," specified the girl. "Anyway it's where the Royal College of Oz is. You know?"

"I guess we can find it, But," the Rainbow grew curious, "what do you want to soak the college for?"

"You wait and see! You're going to be surprised." And then as she raced away to pack some cloud cakes and pick a few colors for use in her art classes, the girl called back teasingly, "Poly goes to college!"

H.M. Wogglebug sent back word to his sovereign (it wasn't easy!) that he would rush things and return to Oz as soon as he possibly could. The allurements were considerable. Ozma's wire had said she was forthwith establishing an institution of higher learning for Oz and that Wogglebug should have the presidency of it if only he would get back on the double. His Office of Public Instruction needed him badly.

Full of his news, Highly rushed to Professor Allweise, who remained, despite the bug's latter devotion rather to sports than to academic studies, his chief confidant. "Professor!" he pleaded, "can you come up with a crash program for me?! I'm wanted back home—to head a college! and I need a degree to back it up."

Allweise took chin in hand. "Hmm. I take it this isn't to be just a sports college—" It was the first moment the insect had time to think that far ahead and he instantly decided it *would* be a sports college. But he wouldn't divulge that just yet. The professor was going on: "You'll have to drop track and field, to say nothing of football." Highly's feelings smote him; he *had* become the college's star flying tackle. It would hurt to leave the ball on the field and go, but a greater destiny called him. "Can you face that?" The wogglebug nodded mutely. "And it'll only be a B.A.," said Professor Allweise. "But maybe that'll be enough to be going on with. If you're prepared to apply yourself diligently—and that'll be nights as well as weekends—I think I can safely assure you you can have your sheepskin at the end of three months. Maybe even with a little laude."

The wogglebug was ecstatic—as well as anxious. "That's drawing it out. My—er—contact said I was needed immediately. But the degree means everything! I'm enormously grateful, Professor. You'll see you're justified."

The two were as good as their words. At the Christmas break in 1906 H.M. Wogglebug, T.E., A.B., was handed his diploma. Oh, how it had wracked his heart all that autumn to hear the shouts from the stadium as W.K.C. was trouncing Notre Sieur, Sleep For-

## THE CARELESS KANGAROO OF OZ

---

est, and Kansas A. and M., while he pressed his feelers to his earholes and bent lower over Plato, Erasmus, and Descartes.

But the momentous day came when Wogglebug stood in the middle of the carpet in his garret room with his two packed carpet bags beside him and waited for Queen Ozma to find him in the Magic Picture and wish him home.

The return was most warmly welcomed. Ozma herself descended from her throne and grasped some of the bug's feelers in both hands. All his old companions from the flight of the Gump were there and added their congratulations to their sovereign's. Already that first day there was a prompt and thorough-going tour of inspection made at the Department of Public Instruction.

"This is deplorable," declared the new arts bachelor, surveying the heaped circulars, prospectuses, monographs, and bulletins that covered table tops and floors, and the almost as heaped dust that mingled with them. "The place is a shambles." He neglected to remind any on-lockers that it was his own fault it was a shambles: for having gone gadding off to America and staying there for close on three years.

To mollify his conscience he set to now to make up for lost time. He got seven maids with seven mops to sweep it for half a year and at the end of that time the echoing building was neat as a new pin and a competent staff engaged to deal with the heaps of brochures, put a stop to the closing of schools, and face whatever new problems arose from day to day.

Among the impacted prospectuses was an offer from the owners of a disused mansion located near where the blue, red, and green countries joined (a tripartite flag of these colors became the standard of the new-founded college). Could Ozma and/or the Public Educator put the building to some use for the general good? The said owners didn't want it any more.

H.M. Wogglebug was delighted and flew off at once in propria persona to inspect the site. What he saw was a rambling wooden early Victorian villa standing in spacious, not too hilly grounds. It would be ideal—to start with. Right at first there would not be all that many students and they could all be accommo-

dated in the house, where also formal classes could be held in the ballroom and dining hall and the girls could do their art in the conservatory. The boys had all outdoors for their sports. Right from the start there was no nonsense about diviaic of the sexes in the realm of Oz higher learning.

Wogglebug quickly deserted the Department again; only now it was ticking over functionally under the guidance of a serviceable Vice-Educator recruited from among the disemployed generals of Ozma's ineffectual army. (The vices he dispensed education in were mild ones.) The bug Bachelor himself spent all his time at the College (quickly named the "College of Art and Athletic Perfection" — and as quickly, and lovingly, dubbed C.A.A.P. by its undergraduates).

Within a month the building was adapted for its new educational role. The ugly brown shingles were painted a gleaming cream. Applications, for admission were coming in from all over. So what about staff?

Of course a natural for dean of the faculty was that Professor Nowitall who had so long waged a rivalry (quite unsuspected by the rival) with the Wandering Wogglebug. Highly wrote to him offering the position in most flattering terms and the professor, no dummy, was as quick to reply graciously and affirmatively. Thus was laid to rest forever any possible enmity between the two pedagogues.

By the time of Queen Ozma's royal progress on returning from the Ev Campaign the College was ready to present a smiling and delightful front to the admiring visitors. Improvements were being made constantly. Alas, many of the fine old trees, of the original estate grounds were leveled to make place for sports arenas, a football field, a cricket pitch, even a bowling green.

H.M. Wogglebug in his office found little to do. The duties of college president were largely ceremonial. Where he had longed to be in the thick of active educating he now found himself boringly signing papers at a desk. Already by the following year the prexy had prevailed on Dean Nowitall to trade places with him. The professor was kicked upstairs — to his secret delight! In his new-

## THE CARELESS KANGAROO OF OZ

---

found leisure he could devote himself TOTALLY to research. He taught the outer-office girl to forge his signature and disappeared among the test-tubes.

As dean, Wogglebug could spend all his time on the sidelines, cheering on his teams. They had only themselves to play against, but what the heck. The college could afford to keep two elevens going and the girls cheered for whichever side they had a boy friend or idol on.

Princess Ozma in her progress had been so pleased with her impressions of the new-founded institution that as soon as she returned to her capital she sent down a writ proclaiming the college "Royal." This was an enormous feather in the cap of Mr. Wogglebug. He renamed the school the "Royal College of Athletic Science" and on the strength of it granted himself (well, the college could grant degrees, and if not to the President himself, then who?!) the title of "Professor." Professor Nowitall made no demur (*his* professorship was based on a doctorate), especially when later that same year he himself was named president.

Different was the reaction of the student body. They affected a disdain at being "royal." They complained that the college initials, R.C.A.S., were no longer pronounceable as a *word*. And the coeds were furious that their department, Art, had been elided utterly from the name to the advantage of the snobbish "royal." No one was mollified when the professors in conclave quickly altered the name to "the Royal College of Scientific Athletics." What help was that? R.C.S.A. was even less pronounceable as a word, and who wanted to be going some day to share initials with the Republic of Caucasian South Africa?

The boys were perhaps secretly pleased that their province of higher learning was thus elevated to be the apparent sole concern of the institution. But was it so? What of Art? And was old Nowitall among his Bunsen burners. and retorts the only one who cared about chemistry and physics?

Professor Wogglebug had now seriously to take himself in hand. He saw that he had become an institutional tyrant, switching priorities and professors around to suit his own personal

whims. Baseball and tennis were after all hobbies: fun things to pass time and improve muscle tone. But was that really what education was about?

Wasn't education rather a matter of learning how to cope in life? and then, when you had acquired those basics, of making acquaintance with ideas and pursuits that could enrich that life? A person—or an insect—who might succeed in growing to physical maturity without having learned anything would not be a free unspoiled untrammelled creature. He would be an imbecile and a spiritual basket case, who would have to be helped in every single office of life down to such basics as feeding and keeping reasonably dry.

Learning was something you couldn't live without and a great part of every day in the life of every living moving being was occupied with learning. Most of the time it wasn't called that and a very great deal of learning was by own inexpert trial and error, so that most of most lives on earth was spent in finding out for oneself what others had already found out before.

The great idea behind schools was that they preserved and stored up knowledge so that, acquiring that, one didn't have to relearn from scratch but could shorten, condense the learning process and then have time to go on and learn NEW things to push the frontiers of knowledge ever forward.

The new-hatched professor phrased those thoughts to himself and then rephrased them in addresses to the student body. Of course attention to sports was to go on but henceforward at the college much more attention was going to be paid to Art (the coeds cheered), to Research (Eydoant Nowitall looked up bewilderedly through his spectacles—and then *he* cheered), to the Humanities (all the humans, cheered), and to Philosophy (in the absence of others to do it, the wogglebug himself cheered). The Professor was going, himself, to endow a chair of entomology. Physics and math were going to be much promoted. Basket-weaving, bel canto, and early morning bird calls were entering the curriculum. The Dean intended to take an active part in music instruction and had already accepted a commission from Emperor

## THE CARELESS KANGAROO OF OZ

---

Nicholas of the Winkies to compose a “Shining Emperor Waltz.” Finally, in a gesture of reconciliation to all parties the institution was to be renamed yet again: the “Royal College of Oz.” Take your pick as to whether Sports or Art or either was to reign supreme there now.



The Lord High Chigglewitz was not much help. As mayor (that's what it amounted to) he was too busy trying to ingratiate all sides to take up the claim of any *one* side against another. He refused to have in all the Winkie, Munchkin, and Gillikin helpers to quiz them as to who might have come to the Gnot Garden and seen Mrs Gnit fly to pieces. The implication of that lady and the querying kangaroo was that whoever it was had himself, for whatever reasons, made off with the part of Grandma that controlled her knitting. It was the unspoken but unbroken rule of the Fuddles that they themselves never stole pieces of each other.

"We can't be too strict or demanding," lamented the Lord High. "After all, we're dependent in part on these casual visitors for getting ourselves put back together when we all fly apart at once. We can't afford to alienate them by being openly suspicious—of course they do carry away a piece of one or another of us—from time to time. Witness my own knee—or the town crier's left shoulder-blade or the ruffles off the schoolmarm's dress. But we can't hold any inquisition over such losses."

"But," cried the kangaroo, driven to despair by the thought of never going to get any replacement mittens, "can't we throw ourselves on their mercy? Call everyone in the town together and announce the deplorable disappearance and just plead for the return of the piece and no questions asked?!"

"We—ll," hummed Chigglewitz, "we could do that," he conceded, "I suppose."

So they did, that evening late, when the strangers had completed their puzzle work and were passing out through the town's main wicker gate. The worried party: The Lord High Chigglewitz, Grandmother Gnit, and the concerned kangaroo, were waiting for them there, and the Lord High made a speech and an appeal.

The result was zilch. The guest workers looked at each other and were merely puzzled. They were not unvocal, however, and had a dozen bright ideas.

"It could be anybody," said one.

## THE CARELESS KANGAROO OF OZ

---

"But not *us*," said another.

"Oh, hardly that," agreed a third. "But anyone else."

"I saw a pack rat scurrying away before me as I went into one house," volunteered a Quadling. "You know how they are."

That awakened speculation, even consternation, for a notorious pack of pack rats were known to infest a woods near the village of Ivador not too far distant in the Quadling country. What if they were moving out and planned to take over Fuddlecumjig?! It would be pack-rat heaven, and the Fuddles meat and drink to them.

"That's nothing," said a Winkie. "Didn't any of you notice that flock of jackdaws that passed over early in the afternoon? They could have carried off keepsakes not just to another town but another country—or even continent."

"Oh, heaven," wailed the consternated kangaroo. "I'll bet that's what happened!"

"*Don't* bet on it," warned a Munchkin—or was he an Emerald Countryman? He was dressed in forest green, which, however, rather strongly verged on spruce blue. "It's obvious what's happened. You remember that party from Baroquea that left earlier in the evening?..."

"Baroquea? Where's that?" asked somebody.

"The next country over from us," supplied the native of the Fiddlestick Forest, "—in Munchkinland. I overheard them at afternoon tea. Incidentally, my congratulations—" he put in, turning to a pleased Gnathan, the cook. "Your crumpets were scrumptious."

"Yes," he went on, "I was sitting at the next table and couldn't help but hear them going on about news that had just reached them from home. It seemed their reigning Baron has lost his mind —"

"Good gracious!" cried Mar, struck with awe, "just like Grandmother here."

"That's exactly the point," triumphed the Forester. "Lose a mind, find a mind. These Baroqueans were the first to leave the dining room. I heard them say they had to rush home im-

mediately. They ‘had to go to the relief of their ruler’! Now I ask you: how were they going to rescue their ruler unless they had a replacement mind along to install in him?”

“Mrs. Gnit!” exclaimed the confident kangaroo. “It all fits! That must be what happened!”

They conferred no further. All were agreed on placing the blame on the absconding Baroqueans. The marsupial was all fire and flame to be off to Munchkinland on the double to claim her own, that is, Grandmother Gnit’s own.

“You can come along of us,” offered the Fiddle-stician. “We’re finished with our visit in these arts anyway.”

“Why, that’ll be splendid,” agreed Mar. “Thanks ever so.”

She left word with the Fuddles, the said word to be relayed to her family: that she’d see them when she saw them. And with new mittens, or she’d know the reason why.

The white cat headed north and east away from the farm. She was just in time. As she reached the first right-angle turn in that flat prairie landscape she took one look back. (The roads all lie checkerboard fashion in that part of the world, following rectangular property-survey section lines.) A small cloud of dust from the direction of Topeka was drawing rapidly nearer. That would be the banker coming to foreclose. Eureka walked on nonchalantly.

Good thing she'd chosen that direction to set out in, the cat reflected; otherwise she might have had to pause and spit—and scratch the banker, if she should get a chance—and that would have been a bore. She'd gone north and east because she knew that was the way her mistress Dorothy had started out that first time she up and left her darling kitten behind to go traipsing off to Oz with a tramp. She'd like to meet that tramp, Eureka would! She'd give him a piece of her mind—and still have plenty more left than he had to start with, to judge by what the girl had retailed of him on her return from that adventure. The so-called “Shaggy Man” had apparently had a lot more charm than brilliance. The charm of ragged clothes and a stolen “love magnet,” forsooth.

Just about now she ought to be coming to the five-points Dorothy had talked of, where everything started looking unfamiliar and being magic. It looked unfamiliar enough all right but that was only because Eureka had never, on her own, been more than half a mile from the farmhouse; she was not the territorial-exploratory type. However, nothing very magical seemed to be happening at the crossroads.

When the cat got hungry she caught a mouse for her dinner and strolled on. By evening she had reached a town.

This must be Butterfield. So far as she recalled, Eureka had never been here before, but she found the name quite appealing. She rather liked butter and ate it when she couldn't get cream. Fields of it would be cheering to pass the night among.

When she had spent a valuable hour scouring the town and

found no field of butter, her resentment again reached a crescendo. "Downright misrepresentations," she fumed as she gave up the search and looked instead for a likely doorstep to panhandle on. And yet, she reflected, there *was* something "attractive" about the place. She felt it especially when she would pass certain shops and small foundries. Something was attracting the metal bells on her collar, pulling them, and her, to the doorways of the said emporia, from which she had an effort to tear herself away.

"Nuts," said the cat, passing the back stoop of a grey (but pink-trimmed) bungalow, "this is as good a place as any." She leaned against the screen door and meowed.

It was not long before a little girl in a pinafore appeared inside the door, took a look, and said, "Oh, a pooffy cat!" Presently any number of children, a maid of all work, and a pretty and youngish woman were also at the door and Eureka's complaints had changed to engratiating purrs.

"Oh, all right, have it in, dears," said the young woman. "But only for tonight, mind. In the morning we'll try to find her owners."

"Owners"; I like that,' thought Eureka disdainfully. Since the departure of the Gale girl the cat considered herself to be strictly her own property. She flounced through the kitchen, on through the dining room, and into the parlor, where she leapt lightly up on the horsehair sofa and installed herself on the antimacassar.

"She looks right at home, doesn't she?" commented the young wife.

"Darn tootin'," the cat said to herself, "—as long as I care to stay."

To her own slight surprise that turned out to be several days. It was all the fault of a dog—with whom she fell in love!

On her first full day in the bosom of the Carmichaels (such was the family's name) Eureka inspected the house. There wasn't all that much to it but she did think proper to get to know it and its possibilities. She *was* exploratory of particular buildings where she might happen to reside.

One thing Eureka especially desired to ascertain was the

## THE CARELESS KANGAROO OF OZ

---

extent of the presence of any other possible animals on the premises. She couldn't smell any but she meant to be quite sure. To this end she even penetrated the shallow attic when Mrs. Carmichael went up there to fetch down the boiler pans for fruitpreserving. The cat received a shock when she discerned in a far and shadowy corner an animal shape of exactly her own size.

A cat! What a bore—to be going to have to share things with another of the species. But on the other hand it would be somebody to talk to. Eureka felt seriously hampered since her return from Oz at having no confidant. She had always refused to say a word to the wretched Toto.

On the alert but with purr in readiness she approached the figure on tiptoe. Odd that it made no move. And was it deaf? It would certainly turn its head, at least, when it heard Eureka coming. *Cats* can hear cats' tread—if they're not stone deaf.

And yet the creature did look charming to the approaching newcomer. That round head, so typically cat-like. The proud erect bearing. The insouciance. That was the sort of cat Eureka herself aimed to be.

Then dreadful disillusion. The newcomer feline drew level with her rival, passed round in front, and looked it in its impassive face. It was a china pug dog!

Eureka hissed and spat in her disappointment. How despicable to get up an honest cat's expectations, then dash them so cruelly. She wanted to fly at the figure and do it an injury but she sensed instantly her claws would avail nothing against that shiny pottery glaze. Then her quick sight caught a reflex of opaque white at the figure's foot. The image had a broken toe. Eureka felt an unwonted pang of selfless sympathy—and her resentment melted.

In the end she spent all morning with the unspeaking staring-eyed figurine. It was a comfortable shady corner in that unseasonably warm season and she knew of no better place in the house to linger in, between meals. Here too she was mercifully free of the too devoted caresses of the four infant Carmichaels.

The mistress was another matter. In the first place, she never touched Eureka. This the cat found delightful. Cats like to have

caresses when *they* like it. They'll let you know soon enough when they want an ear-scratching. They come to you with erect tail and rub against your calves. That's the *Signal*. Then you may lean down and tickle their ear roots and administer a stroke or two. Not too much! They'll walk off when they've had enough, but will linger longer if you're not too effusive.

But Mrs. Carmichael never responded when Eureka, after a suitably long period of keeping her distance, did deign to approach her at last in the kitchen and lean against her skirt. She *said* nice things: "Pretty puss" and "Cat got your tongue?" (when Eureka didn't meow or purr) "You're a nice quiet animal." And she did nice things, like put down a saucer of milk next to the ice chest. But she didn't touch. Eureka was intrigued.

The attempt to locate the cat's owner produced no result. Mrs. Carmichael phoned here and there and finally to the newspaper office and asked them to run a little personals notice in the next issue of the weekly. Meanwhile the stray was allowed to stay.

Eureka was not witness to those enterprises. She was in the attic, lengthening her residency from day to day. She couldn't seem to tear herself awe from the cool impassive image in her chosen nook. Unspeaking, the china dog was still company for her in the long hours she let pass in half sleep. Its impassivity was a quality she aspired to, herself, and its coolness (physical she enjoyed in the heat of the day, when she would boldly drape herself over the figurine, head upon head and paws hanging down.

The family were not long in discovering her dedication. It must not be denied that the children were disappointed that the cat did not prove more of a companion in their play. Though Eureka still called herself a kitten she had long been, in disposition, a cat, even a staid one. But all of that would come to visit her in the attic. After just a day they always knew where to find her.

"Funny she likes that old china dog, isn't it?" said Mrs. Carmichael to Molly the maid as one scrubbed potatoes and the other peeled them.

"Yes'm."

"The dog is no beauty, I must admit. I'm fond of it myself but

## THE CARELESS KANGAROO OF OZ

---

my husband won't allow it in the sitting room. He says it offends his artist's eye."

"Yes'm." Molly was kind-hearted but no conversationalist. Talking to her was an opportunity for Mrs. Carmichael to talk to herself without appearing odd.

"Of course, it is a little out of date. Victorian isn't popular any more. It was old-fashioned when I got it."

"When was that, ma'am?" Molly *could* say something.

"Oh, for Christmas, when I was a little girl. Dad had found it in a pawn shop in Kansas City. Already then it wouldn't do as an ornament, out in polite society, but he thought it would be fun for me as a toy. And I did love it. I used to make doll clothes for it."

Molly giggled indulgently.

On another afternoon Mrs. Carmichael continued her reminiscences in the presence of the statuette itself and of Eureka and the children. Sitting on the attic floor (Molly always kept that admirably dustfree) she took the image in her lap. For some reason, that made Eureka purr. The lady turned it upside down.

"See there?" she said and gestured. The base of the statue was an irregular flat surface, bisque-white and of about a square half-foot in extent. "See those marks?" There were two long narrow soiled streaks-parallel across the plaster.

"What are they, mother?" said Matthew.

"Adhesive tape. Or what's left from it. It was rather funny."

"What was funny?" said Mark, who liked a joke.

"Oh, I shouldn't say 'funny.' Odd. It was odd that there was a little verse there on a card, attached by adhesive tape."

"'Verse'?" said Lucasta. A new word for her.

"A little poem. 'Poem'? Lines that rhyme and tell a little story."

John couldn't talk yet but he could listen—and knew enough to react to the word "story." He gurgled.

They began over. Matthew said, "Tell us the story!"

"Oh, dear." Mrs. Carmichael realized perhaps she'd bitten off more than she'd bargained for. "The whole thing? I don't know if I can remember it... though I certainly knew it by heart when I was growing up. Well, you see, it was about this dog and almost



as if whoever owned it had a bit of a guilty conscience—”

“What’s that?” asked Mark.

“Feeling bad about something you’ve done. This person felt bad—maybe—because he—I kind of think it was she—got rid of the statue.”

“Why?” said Lucasta. (She should have been Luke but they ran out of boys just then.)

“You mean, how do I know?” The mother knew that children’s “why?” is an all-purpose question asking everything the speaker can’t articulate. “Because whoever it was wrote this verse and ‘sent’ it along with she said goodbye to her pug. A sort of little ‘passport,’ you might say, wishing for the statue that it would come into caring hands.”

This little flight of fancy made the children feel solemn before their mother. Faintly embarrassed, she pressed on: “Anyway, the poem went like this:

“I first knew roundness from your shiny head.  
I first knew smoothness from you satin skin.  
And when I chipped your toe and went to bed  
I first knew sin.

‘You throned before the fender to warn off  
A child impetuous—but then you dwelt  
Upon the mantelpiece, and did you scoff  
At how I felt?

‘Your flattened nose, your frown, your goggle eyes,  
Your pink bow, that we called your “sugar cake,”  
And those blue-mottled haunches did I prise  
For old sake’s sake?

‘No. When from attic bundles we unrolled you,  
My best-beloved cried “Hideous!” and sold you.”\*

---

\* Copyright 1963 by *The New Statesman*, London.

## THE CARELESS KANGAROO OF OZ

---

The children clapped at the little performance. Not that they understood it exactly. The mother had to explain how much it meant to her. The little 'gem' had come to be, as she grew older, more precious to her than the statuette itself had been in earlier years. "It's very charming, you see—to me anyway. And I think whoever wrote it must have been a nice person. I'd like to have known her. But by the time I grew to appreciate it fully it was years too late to find out who had written it. The card had fallen off and been lost, and Dad couldn't even remember where it was he bought it."

Nostalgia had been added to nostalgia, incidentally saving the pug from a rougher fate. Mrs. Carmichael would never sell the statue now, even if it was not allowed into polite society.

The pleased and reassured Eureka.

Yes, Poly went to college. Her dad arranged for a shower for her and though she didn't receive any gifts (except those of good nature, charm, and at least the average intelligence that had been granted her thousands of years ago at her birth) she did arrive one morning, as the rising sun sparkled through rain on the doorstep of the administration building of the Royal College of Oz. In her hand was her small bundle of needfuls tied up in a length of gossamer.

She rang the bell. A young man answered and was pleased at what he saw. It was a sophomore in Business Administration, who was picking up practical experience in the college office.

Polychrome laughed to cover her embarrassment, and her laughter always delighted people. "Which is the way to the Philosophy class?" she enquired when she was able to stop her giggles.

"Way? Philosophy?" repeated the boy, puzzled, but was no dummy and quickly twigged: a country maiden, naive about protocol at institutions of higher learning. He invited the rainbow maiden inside and put pencil and paper: a questionnaire and application blank, before her. He smiled encouragingly. "Just fill those out. That's the first thing."

Polychrome took one glance and said, "But I can't read. That's what I'm here for!" and she laughed again engagingly. Then she added cryptically: "The Shaggy Man was so good at reading."

The young man (his name was Fex) blushed. *Such* country unschooledness he had not met before. But, as I say, he was no dummy. Quick as anything he said, "Oh, you'll want Remedial then, to start off with. That's fine. You won't need these then," and he took away the paper and pencil.

"Remedial?" said the Rainbow's daughter and was duly impressed. Was she going to get to study Remedial as well? How marvelous. She'd heard of the Remedial Ages and would not be averse at all to adding a session of history to her course of studies. Besides, if she was not mistaken, the Shaggy Man had been an

## THE CARELESS KANGAROO OF OZ

---

expert at Remedial, and she was not going to be any less.

"But in such cases," Fex was going on, "the Dean likes to have a word with newly enrolling students."

"I'm very good at enrolling," said Poly and hung her head modestly. "There's nothing about dancing I don't know. And enjumping and enwhirling. I've trained for years." She didn't startle the young man by saying "eons." "But maybe I'm best at enskipping."

"Oh, splendid," said the young man, getting his cues perfectly now. "Anyway, the Dean enjoys every occasion for seeing the student body."

Polychrome stopped short. Don't forget that this was in 1909 and thinking on campuses not nearly so advanced as it is now. "Oh, dear," breathed Poly. "Am I going to have to undress?"

"Oh, no," Fex reassured. "Not at your first meeting." He would have his little joke. Polychrome breathed easier and followed as the youth led the way out of the stately Administration Building and over the lush green-red-blue grass toward the banks of a little river.

"Are we going to the greenhouse?" asked the girl.

Now it was Fex's turn to be brought up short. "Why, no; to the South Gymnasium. The professor spends all his time there."

"'Professor'? I thought you said we were going to see a Bean."

Fex *really* had all he could do not to burst out and spoil all the fun. But still he was puzzled and had to slow down and look at his visitor closely. "'Bean'? You thought the Professor was an overgrown walking plant perhaps? Something like Jack Pumpkinhead? Well, you're not completely out in left field. He *is* an overgrown insect."

Poly didn't know about left field but she did see her mistake and beamed radiantly. "Professor Wogglebug?! Of course! I was expecting to see him right away at the start, actually. We're old friends! I danced to a waltz of his last year. Quite lovely—" and she hummed the tune of "The Shining Emperor," which inevitably brought on a few dance steps over the springing sward, ending in a pirouette.

The young academic was charmed. "You're most accomplished," he praised. "I wouldn't be surprised if Professor Wogglebug should invite you to teach rather than study here."

Polychrome looked disturbed. "Oh, I *must* study," she insisted. "Otherwise there's no way to win the man I love."

Fex was crushed. Polychrome had already demonstrated half a dozen ways to win *his* heart and none of them were academic; rather, the reverse.

The dean-professor received them with courtesy and then with enthusiasm when he realized who Polychrome was. "Of course! We met last year at Princess Ozma's birthday party. And how have you passed the time since then, my dear?"

"Sighing," stated Poly succinctly.

"Good gracious. I didn't realize there was ever anything to sigh about on the rainbow."

"There isn't. Mostly troubles melt like lemon drops. It's on earth that the sighs begin. Then once they start they can follow you everywhere, even over the rainbow."

Poly seemed to be conducting here her own little seminar in philosophy. But gracious, that wasn't why she had come. She wanted to acquire knowldge and wisdom, and that in a hurry. She stated her business.

"My dear Miss Rainbow!" cried the professor when he understood. "We will be enchanted to have you on our rolls."

"And be eaten for breakfast?!" cried the maiden in dismay. She was beginning to get a very queer idea of what went on in colleges.

The two collegians laughed at the sally appreciatively. Wogglebug hastily explained in words of one syllable that Polychrome could certainly be accepted as a student. Did she wish to register for the full four-year course?

"'Years'?! Oh, heavens, does it take that long?" wailed the Rainbow's daughter in yet further dismay. "I thought a few days—well, maybe a few weeks," she amended when she saw the gapes of the other two and realized she was appearing somewhat *too* naive, if not downright moronic. "You see, I have to be on my

## THE CARELESS KANGAROO OF OZ

---

way again quickly. I mean, I have to run and catch up—" She broke off. If Polychrome was ignorant she was not insensitive. She was aware already that young Fex had been cast down by her hint that her affections were already claimed.

The Professor saved the scene for her. "—with the rainbow?" he completed her sentence. "Yes, I'm sure your father can't spare you too long at a time. I should have realized that at once." With a sigh of relief Polychrome allowed the bug to remain with his mistaken conclusion. "Well, of course there *are* the Wizard's School Pills. A dozen of those and you'll know all we have to teach in no time. But we try to keep the use of those to a minimum; really just in hopeless cases, where pupils can't seem to absorb anything by traditional methods. If they can't take in learning through their heads—it's guaranteed by way of their stomachs. But that could never apply to you, Miss Polychrome..."

"Never mind, I'll have some," decided the maiden without more ado. She consulted her memory. "Let's see: I'd like one for Reading—that's a must, of course. And then Writing and Spelling—oh, that reminds me. I have to learn to cast spells. Do you do Magic?"

"Oh, dear, no!" laughed the wogglebug. "That's one branch of learning that's quite out of bounds for us: Queen Ozma and her advisers determined some years back that none but a few Adepts were going to be allowed to practice magic in Oz."

Polychrome looked at him with big eyes. "But I've *got* to learn some magic! I mean—well, *he* was using magic; anyway... a bit of it. I have to be able to do at least as much."

The others looked doubtful. Since Ozma's embargo on the use of magic the subject was virtually taboo in the fairyland: a queer reversal of the natural order of things. Meanwhile, however, wisdom was what Polychrome chiefly wanted to acquire and for that you definitely didn't need to be a magician. They agreed to leave the issue of the study of magic in abeyance for a while.

To distract the girl from her disappointment, Professor Wogglebug, as he accompanied the others to the Ladies' Dormitory, ventured: "Can you help me with a problem that's bothering

me? Every year about this time we change the name of the College. I'm about to run out of inspiration though. There are just so many changes one can ring in so circumscribed a field." He ran over the four varieties of official designation the college had had so far;

Poly pursed her brow. "Let me see... Well, the Registrar—" here she nodded recognitively at the delighted Fex, and preened herself that she had learned at least one word of university terminology, "the Registrar told me you're awfully keen on sports here at the college. What if you were to call it the 'Royal Athletic College of Oz'?"

The others were charmed and adopted the new title by acclaim (subject to review by the College Board of Governors). Certainly the name was as pleasingly bland and misleading as all the others the college had already had in its brief history.

They came to see the Shaggy Man off at the Winkie Gate.

From time immemorial there had been four formal arches, one at each cardinal compass point, as markers of where the Land of Oz began. There was, of course, no fence around Oz; one knew well enough when one passed over the border by the sharp division between colorful grass and nearly hueless sand. But just at these four places a grandiose pedimented arch arose, rather unmotivated-looking in the surrounding flat (except at the mountain-verged Gillikin frontier) landscape. One arch was in Corinthian style, one Doric, one Ionic, and one Tuscan (the "Composite" was being saved for later), and each was carved in a typical stone of the area: purple Purbeck or red sandstone or, as here at the Winkie frontier, yellow soapstone.

Princess Ozma herself was there and, not to be outdone (besides, they needed her magic know-how), Sorceress Glinda. The Shaggy Man's new-won comrade, the Wizard of Oz, took part. But best of all, Shag's first friend in Oz (and earlier), Princess Dorothy, had come to wave farewell.

Each had a gift for the wanderer to assist him on his journey. The Queen had contributed the magnificent suit of clothes the Shaggy Man wore. Indeed, for the period of this venture it was agreed he would be called "the Snazzy Man." Ozma had early on come to the conclusion that for his appearance in the presence of the wronged-but-to-be-righted Miss Penelope Thacker it would cut no ice to be seen as a disreputable old tramp. No, for this time the Man was smartly turned out in a green Emerald City costume on vaguely Alpine lines, with leather panels and knickerbockers, serviceable for both hiking and town wear. He carried (as long as he was in the Princess' presence) a subdued version of the pointed Oz hat, minus bells, and his atrocious old beard was trimmed to a smart Van Dyke.

The gift of the red witch was a service, not a thing. She was going to lift one corner of the pall of invisibility that lay over Oz and let Shag slip out.



The Wizard's present would then come into play. He had manufactured a marvelous pair of—what would one call them? Clogs? They looked more like wooden shoes than anything but were in fact made of indestructible ozynium painted to resemble leather but in their bulky multi-purpose shape undoubtedly reminiscent of the black wooden work-shoes of Scandinavia.

These were magic shoes, of course. But would the magic work outside, in the great world? That was the question. One just never knew when the magicity of fairyland artifacts was going to go on functioning beyond the confines of such a land. The shoes would undoubtedly do their work as long as Shag was still on the magic continent of Sempetnumquam, but afterwards? Would their magic be operative beyond there? As was, for instance, Ozma's enchantment of a road in Kansas just a few months ago, or like the miraculosity of the "Queer-Visitors" who had proven not to lose a whit of their magical viability on their extended tour of the United States. Or would the shoes fall off like Dorothy's silver ones did before they had even accompanied her beyond the limits of the great desert?

No, anyway they were not going to fall off! The Wizard had seen to that. Apart of the bulky construction of the clogs was a strap over the instep that was guaranteed never to come adrift without the conscious manipulation of the wearer. The shoes were slick—and flat-bottomed; in that they were like skis in miniature. A switch conveniently located at the side of each made wheels let down and then you had roller skates! But you didn't have to wear yourself out taking steps and glides; by pressing down the toes inside the clogs the footwear moved by itself. The harder you pressed the faster you went. Then just in case the magic didn't after all work in the outer world the Snazzy Man still had handsome (if clumsy) boots that would never wear out.

Dorothy's gift was not magic but it was appreciated for all that. During the months of their common residence in the Palace of Magic in the Emerald City and in the course of frequent visits to the Shaggy Man's rooms Dorothy had seen that her friend had gone over to fixed-residence living with a vengeance. Where

## THE CARELESS KANGAROO OF OZ

---

formerly he had owned not even a bandanna on a stick, his apartment, just between August and Christmas, had filled up—well, nearly—with every manner of delightful junk he had happened across. The Shaggy Man could at last give way to a life-long-suppressed tendency to be a packrat!

Of course he was not going off to America without a capacious suitcase to hold his finds in. That's what Dorothy gave him: a splendid rectangular case ornamented, both sides, with the design of the flag of Oz (done in shiny leatherette). She also tucked inside the hold-all the address of the bank in Topeka that held the mortgage on Uncle Henry's farm.

Thus equipped the Man was ready to set off—into the unknown; indeed, into the invisible. For just as Oz was now invisible to anyone approaching it from any direction, any direction was now invisible to anyone looking from within Oz. This phenomenon was limited in its practical effects (well, nearly) to people situated, as were our friends, at the Oz frontier. The great surrounding desert appeared, beyond the Winkie Gate, as just so much nothing. It wasn't even a vaguely heaving level area of cloud. It was just emptiness, or perhaps, like a vast colorless opaque curtain let down, close-fitting, on all sides.

Yes; for when Witch Glinda essayed to reverse, just slightly, for the benefit of the traveler, the witchcraft spell that caused the invisibility, it took the form of her stepping through the gate-way, bending down and lifting up a flap of nothing. Underneath, the onlookers could get a glimpse, sure enough, of yellowish sands: with the sun beating down on them.

"Now, Shaggy," said the Sorceress, "be careful as you step through that no part of you but your shoe bottoms touches the sands. This area of the deserts, as you all know, is the deadliest of all. And then, away you go on your ski-shoes. Best of luck!"

The others gave their handshakes and farewells, Glinda drew the curtain of invisibility a little higher, the Snazzy Man ducked and stepped through—and vanished.

It was a golden journey to Baroquea. The calm kangaroo (she *would* be calm) tucked her paws in her armpits and jogged along beside the five Emero-Munchkins' prettily decorated blue-green cart. As they proceeded in a northeasterly direction the aquacostumed people entertained their companion with a detailed description of what made the Baroqueans baroque.

"They seem stuck in the late seventeenth century," explained one.

Mar listened with all ears. This was so new to her.

"Yes," clarified another, "you see, they delight in excessive technical development in a particular form or style within a fixed scope or subject."

"Mmm, interesting," said the marsupial. "How does that work out in practice—?"

"It means they emphasize the elaborate and adore the adorned."

"They worship the weird and the whimsical."

"They go for the garish and gaudy, not to mention the grotesque."

"They flaunt the florid and flamboyant and are fond of whatever is fussy and frilly."

"They delight in decoration."

"I begin to understand," said the kangaroo. "But I can't help wondering what could have attracted them in a rather ordinary piece of a rather ordinary old lady."

"But we've told you: they favor the fantastic."

"They espouse the extravagant."

"They opt for the odd, the ornate, the overdone, the outrageous."

"But really: Grandma Gnit's topknot is neither fantastic, extravagant, or odd," protested the animal.

"Wait 'til you see it on the head of the Baroque Baron!"

With that Mar had to be content.

They spent that night at a charming inn and got away not too

## THE CARELESS KANGAROO OF OZ

---

early or late next day. By *that* night they were at the Garnet City and got invited, as all newcomers were, to a masked ball which went on 'til all hours. By the following evening, as the red was fading from the sky and also from the landscape, the party came to the campus of the Royal Athletic College of Oz.

The college being set off by itself, not near any town, visitors to the institution were put up in the old, original wooden mansion, which was now given over entirely to dormitories. Also for the cultivated kangaroo and her companions that was the arrangement. As a customary courtesy the newcomers were invited to dinner that night at the Dean's table in the refectory.

"Ah, fellows from the Fiddlestick Forest," exclaimed Professor Nowitall when he caught sight of them.

"Will you favor us with music after the repast?" fell in Dean Wogglebug. The foresters were famous violinists, training from an early age on the instruments that grew wild in their native woods.

"Delighted!" agreed the travelers and did duly perform.

"What a pity," sighed the wogglebug, clicking his chelae in the concert hall after a particularly affecting cavatina. "You've just missed the Rainbow's daughter. She'd have loved to perform to your playing."

"Miss Polychrome? Has she been here?" asked the kapelmeister.

"Yes, she's just finished a four-month stay with us. We were able to load her down with degrees by the time she left. She's a fairy, of course, and when such apply themselves they can pick up expertise in no time. How was it, Eydoant?" Wogglebug turned to his colleague. "Wasn't it seven languages Poly acquired during her course of studies here?"

"Mmm," agreed the Iresident. "Including Chinese calligraphy. She majored in Musicology and Choreography but also qualified in Archeology, Botany, Chemistry, Diplomacy, Education, Folklore, Geography, History—and so on, through the alphabet."

"Don't forget her Law degree," warned the Dean. "Outside of Music that was, curiously, the subject she did best in."

"I'm glad she had Musicology," reminisced Professor Nowitall. "Otherwise, we might have had to let her down on the letter M—because she was frightfully keen to get a grounding in Magic, but there we couldn't help her."

"What did she do, then?" asked the curious kangaroo, intrigued. "Just give up on it?"

"Oh, dear me, no," assured both professors. "She's gone off to the Wizard Wam to try to acquire some Magic on the sly. She knows of course that the powers that be have forbidden the use of magic in the fairyland—which seems like a contradiction in terms, doesn't it?—but she's determined to achieve at least a little proficiency in that discipline, even so."

They sat for a long time in silence, and then talked again of Polychrome as they remembered her, girlish and gifted and full of charm, and of the Studies that had altered her, and of so many mysteries of time and age and of the mind, of the little fairy who had been most old and of the strange ultimate dream of blue magic.

"Do you think she will ever find it?" Mar asked. "Blue magic, you say?"

"Yes, we suppose that's what Wam will teach her if he does—away there in Munchkinland... Well, actually, he's right on the blue-purple border."

The direction stuck in the marsupial's mind. For the nonce, however, she had business elsewhere in the blue country. The party slept the next night camped out across the water from haunting Romanti City. There was a little unmanned travelers' lodge there to accommodate the visitors who *would* come to see the enchanting place, if only from a distance. For most, if indeed not quite all, travelers it was next to impossible to get into the fabled city, and then only for the briefest fleeting stay.

A day or two more and the Munchkin party were home in the Fiddlestick Forest. They urged the questing kangaroo to linger among them but she wanted to press on. Next morning they showed her the road to Baroquea and by noon she was there.

As was to be expected, the quaint kangaroo was wildly popular from the moment she set foot in the tiny barony of Baroquea,

## THE CARELESS KANGAROO OF OZ

---

for if there is a more baroque-looking animal than a kangaroo (unless it be a giraffe) I'd like to know what it is. The huge hinder legs and their contrast with the tiny, nearly useless front paws. The vast tail to steer by—or to sit back against as on a built-on deckchair. The pouch slit in the front. Are there animal features more baroque than these? (well, maybe an elephant's trunk!)

The antipodal kangaroo: who can unseat her?: sitting up there plumb-weighted and lifting her beautiful slender face to nibble at a round white peppermint drop which she loves, sensitive mother kangaroo, her full antipodal eyes so dark, so big and quiet and remote, having watched so many empty dawns in silent Australia.<sup>§</sup>

Through the throng of admirers the kangaroo made her way with difficulty to the presence of the Baron. His reception chamber was a spacious hall lined with alternating bands of royal-blue velvet and marshmallow, set at the top of a thin tower eighty feet high which contained only the winding approach stairway.

To make as favorable an initial impression as possible Mar prostrated herself, but at once realized the ruler was not looking at her or at any worldly thing. Suddenly the Lord Vizier raised his staff of office and all murmuring ceased and the Baron began solemnly and slowly to intone:

"A big calm drowsy elephant found great happiness in jungly Kenya, lying most nonchalantly on pink quilted rugs, snugly tucked under veils, while xenophobic yaks zithered."

"What a baroque thought," muttered Mar.

"Of course," said a bystander. "That's why he does it. Since he lost his mind he's at great pains to turn out these exquisitely lathe-turned sentences—to prove he's still baroque enough to rule over us."

"Lost his mind'?" echoed the kangaroo in sudden alarm. "But I made sure the Baron had got a replacement one—" Only, now that she looked carefully, the marsupial could catch no glimpse of Grandmother Gnit's topknot among the jumble of wig curls,

yarmulke, mantilla, and coronet atop the Baron's head. She turned full to her neighbor in the throng and laid a paw on his arm. "Did not a party of your citizens recently return from the south with a new mind for your ruler?"

The fellow frowned, but only in concentration. "Seems like I did hear of a group who were holidaying at Fuddlecumjig. But I've never heard that they came home with anything more than they took with them." He paused. "*If* Baron Rococo had had a new mind installed I know we'd all have heard of it."

The kangaroo blanched, then fell into abject apologies to the Baroquean, to his more than somewhat bewilderment. Of course the animal was expressing contrition for the suspicions, nay, utmost certainty, she'd nourished all these days. "Oh, those stupid Fiddlesticians!" she fumed as she stumbled away. "They were sure the people from Baroquea had stolen the piece of Mrs. Gnit. I've a good mind to go back there and thump them into the middle of next week."

But that would be non-productive. She had rather now to give herself furiously to think. Where was she to go? What was she to do? She needed a quiet spot to remuster her scattered forces. 'Just like a Fuddle!' Mar thought ruefully.

As she made her way out through the crowd to the stairs she heard Ruler Rococo making a new pronouncements "After breaking certain delicate electrical fixtures..."

## chapter sixteen

But this wasn't getting Eureka to Oz.

She realized she'd found a very snug berth in the Carmichaels' attic—or wherever else she chose to rove in their house and grounds. But she had to face it: it was dull, whereas in the household of Dorothy Gale's family there were much wider horizons. There was the chance to go to Oz now and then—though Eureka had been denied that chance the last two times around. The injustice rankled. It was no good just lying here in the lap of luxury and pretending one could be content, with that.

One morning she was gone. She didn't say goodbye to anybody. That would have been un-cat-like. She just waltzed off without a meow. No! to one creature she did say goodbye—in the form of an extra half-hour's lingering around and lying on top of and purring. Or let's say "one object." (An interesting speculation: how much is an inanimate object impervious to strong feelings that may be directed towards it? There are still plenty of unanswered questions in our cosmos.)

You've guessed who the object was? There, you see: an inanimate object has already become a being with a personality, even a semi-human one, to be designated by a pronoun "who"! —Toby, the Life-Sized Pug.

Eureka really did have pangs on parting with the pug. But there: she couldn't carry it with her, and the silly thing hadn't sense enough to come to life and run off with her. She gave a little bitten-off meow and left.

The outlook did seem hopeless. The only single clue the cat had was that Dorothy, that time with the old tramp, had set out going eastward. This was known because the travelers (so Dorothy afterwards, in great detail, related to her kitten) had continued on in the same general direction and at last fetched up in the Winkie land of Oz, which one and all know to lie (most times) in the west of Oz.

If Eureka kept on going east she too would come to Oz. She had to believe that. What else could she believe? Oh, it might take



years, because this time there was no Ozma magicking the roads to make sure that someone arrived in the magic land. Eureka would believe in the East and following yonder star to at last achieve her goal. To look in any other direction and to doubt: that way lay madness.

The slim white cat with the belled collar stepped out along the slim white road east from Butterfield. The road was white with dust and gravel. It was being a dry season and the stones hurt her feet, so she kept to the grass verge, where there *was* one. By nightfall of her first day she had covered a number of miles. At least she had come so far she didn't fear pursuit.

By the night of the second day, however, Eureka couldn't help wishing there had *been* pursuit, even successful pursuit. She crawled, weary and dejected, into another barn and sought the hay. "I guess it will be mouse again tonight," she said to herself, with disdain bordering on revulsion.

As she lay in her temporary nest and mumbled the bones of an unwary rat-child she could not help but recall evenings when she would lie in Dorothy's lap, with a tempting dish of sour milk and fish-heads conveniently close by, and the young girl would sing her to sleep with cradle songs learned far away in another, better, magical land. Oh, how could she hurt her Eureka so? leaving her behind all alone in an abandoned house? The kitten did not stamp her feet now in fury; she wept inwardly in loss and hurt.

But maybe the morning would be brighter? She looked out. No, it was raining! Oh, well, the farmers needed it, she said to herself ironically. And what was she to do all day? Like every cat she hated the wet. The dust was laid along that pebbly road, but was mud any improvement for a traveling cat?

She lurked in the hay loft the whole day. She didn't even find any further baby rats. Rats have their own intercom system and the local tribe made themselves scarce as long as it was known that a strange cat was ravaging in the neighborhood. Eureka was thus forced by hunger to stalk, all damp (by then) the hundred yards to the farmhouse door and utter winning purrs— that came

## THE CARELESS KANGAROO OF OZ

---

out strangely like distressed howls.

The farm wife opened the door and batted at her with a broom. "Nasty great thing!" she screeched, not realizing that Eureka in her heart was a tender white kitten. "It'll be after the chickens, I'll be bound!"

The cat made off with scant dignity, aware that she had nothing to hope for in the way of a handout by hanging around. She retreated to the barn but they saw her go and came after her with torches and pitchforks and she was constrained to flee outright. She just had presence of mind enough to remember to flee east.

Two days later the white cat, thoroughly bedraggled and chastened, came to the shore of a great river: the longest in North America, the "wide Missouri." (For map buffs, the location was about eleven miles northwest of Kansas City, between there and Leavenworth.) There was nothing to see but water.

Good glory! what was a self-respecting, though abandoned, cat to do now? Eureka, like all cats, could swim. But was she going to give herself to the embrace of that wet monster, whose farther shore, from her vantage point a foot above the ground, she could not even see, though intellectually she might well be aware that it was there?

Lower than low in her spirits she set out to trudge along the river bank. The stream appeared to flow from north to south. Which way to go eventually to reach the east she had no way of knowing. She just went.

When she came to a small pink clapboard house set high on the bank she gave a wail of pure longing. For a start, she'd always liked the color pink. Eureka sat down in the still-wet grass and remembered a time when—oh, only very briefly—she herself had been pink. It had happened during an adventure in middle earth when the light of a rose-colored sun suspended there had caught her just right. She had aroused marvelment among her companions at being seen to be thus in the pink and that too had flattered her ego and increased her liking for the color. But as dear (though ultimately disappointing) Dorothy herself had pointed out: "Eureka isn't pink; she's white. It's this queer light that gives her

that color.”

Yes, she was white: a rather muddy white by this time. The cat sighed and abandoned her little dream of memory. She leapt up with what lightness she could onto the picket fence and then down into the nicely tended little garden. Why, there was catnip there! She could smell it plainly. Anyone who wilfully planted catnip must like cats. She happened to know the shrub was not native to America, so where you found it you might be sure it was there “on purpose.”

The relief of that thought made the cat perk up mightily, so much so that there was something of the old confident and ingratiating kitten about her when she stepped to the Dutch back door of the cottage and meowed most movingly.

Surprisingly suddenly the top of the door moved inward with a slight creak. But that was all, for just a moment. Then Eureka saw what was unmistakably the top of a broomstick in motion, and she made ready to fly. Once broomed, twice shy.

But no: apparently the broom was but doing its normal duty. It switched to and fro, and then in a few moments the bottom of the double door opened and a panful of dust and grit flew over Eureka’s head. Well, almost. Enough of the flying waste fell on her fur to make her sneeze and spit

“Darling!” cried the broomster and when the dust cleared Eureka saw an old hook-nosed woman in black bombazine resting on her knees and staring. “How long have you been there? And has the cat got your tongue? I never heard a thing.”

Eureka made no reply, just stood her ground, ready to advance or to flee. She was receiving very mixed signals.

“Well, aren’t you coming in?” said the old hag and moved aside invitingly. “Your dish of curds is by the fire. I’ve been expecting you,”

Curious and curiouser. Eureka hadn’t been expecting herself; how had this crone known of her approach? Still, a welcome was a welcome and that was just what the cat had had need of at this juncture. Warily she stepped past the old woman’s legs and looked inside the room to check the exits. Reassured, she went to the old-

## THE CARELESS KANGAROO OF OZ

---

fashioned fireplace, where a pot—actually a cauldron—hung from a jack over glowing coals. It was a cooking fire and this was a witch's kitchen.

There were the curds, indeed, and my, they did look tempting. As she took her first exploratory lick Eureka wondered where the old woman got them. She hadn't seen a cow in the garden and she couldn't picture nearby farmers delivering such an old-world comestible. In the fairy-tale countries she'd visited, however, Eureka had found curds (*and* whey) quite the usual thing.

"I wonder where you've come from?" mused the woman, as she leaned on her broomstick and watched the famished cat slurp. "Oh ever mind, you're here. That's the main thing. You want some more? No, you're washing your face; that means you're through."

Eureka lowered her paw and looked at her hostess critically. "When I wash something it means exactly what I intend it to mean, neither more nor less," she said severely.

"Hnh, hnh!" wheezed the crone delightedly. "You don't like people jumping to conclusions, do you? Well, who does? All right then: *Do you want your dish refilled?*"

Eureka stared. The old woman couldn't have understood her! Or could she? Her response had been uncannily apt. Eureka of course (since Oz) still understood every word of spoken English but it was more than was to be expected that any human would grasp her own speech, that, annoyingly, just came out in straight Feline whenever she spoke in the U.S.A.

Just in case the surprising woman *did* understand, Eureka walked against her skirt, stuck up her tail, looked up at her with blue eyes, and purred loudly, "No, thank you. I've supped sufficiently." Actually she still felt famished, but she wasn't going to lose her dignity.

"Fine," said the crone. "Come this way then." She led the way upstairs to a little garret. Quickly Eureka darted an eye about. No misleading animal here, constated the cat; worse luck. But otherwise the place was comfortingly like in Butterfield. The woman pointed to a pile of old clothes and bed linen. "That ought to be big enough to make a nest of any size you like—or for a family, if

you get one.”

Eureka put her hands on her hips—figuratively. “A family!” Did the creature think she was going to stay here forever? What presumption. She’d stay as long as she liked but not one moment longer. And she was *certainly* not thinking of courtship and mating at this stage.

She jumped on the pile of stuffs. Nicely soft, but with rough patches, just like she liked it. There was even a length of old Chinese silk: perfect for sharpening her claws in.

“Have a snooze, my dear Grimalkin,” said the woman. “Don’t be disturbed by that family of young bluebirds in the nest just outside the window. And if there’s anything you want just call for it.” She half-curtseyed and with an insinuating grimace turned away.

Eureka still stood with hands on hips. All very nice, but where did the creature get off calling her “Grimalkin?” Did she think Eureka was her familiar or something? The cat remained standing still, with a big question mark in a balloon over her head.

‘Bluebirds, ey?’ she ruminated. She recollected how peckish she still felt. A bit of bluebird now might just hit the spot. She marched to the window, sprang up and peered out. There they were, the little darlings. Unluckily the window was shut. Eureka could do much, but she couldn’t shove up window sashes.

She went on looking, and then she saw the mother bird return to the nest with a juicy long worm. The two females, cat and bird, looked on lovingly while the young consumed their dinner.

A glance through the big tree’s leaves showed Eureka that the sky was clearing at last after those rainy days. There was even a rainbow!

The adult bird flew off again on a further foraging expedition. Eureka stared after her. “If happy little bluebirds fly,” she wondered, “beyond the rainbow, why, oh why can’t I!”

## chapter seventeen

"But, Mr. Wam," exclaimed Polychrome, the rainbow's daughter, "isn't this just witchcraft?"

"Yes, indeed, my dear," assured the genial magician. "Wizardry *is* witchcraft—and 'wizard' no more, in common parlance, than the masculine form of 'witch'."

"But I have to learn *real* magic," almost wailed the disillusioned graduate. "I mean—please don't be wounded—and your tricks are *charming*—but the people at Royal Athletic said that inasmuch as I'm a fairy I'm entitled to know genuine fairy magic, not just—forgive me—light sorcery."

"Morally, no doubt, Miss Poly," confirmed the wizard, "but, alas, not legally. Not since the queen's decree of six years ago. Actually it's strictly illicit for me to have taught you even the few enchantments I have done. You know, in accordance with the law, I've completely given up the public practice of magic and am confining myself to my mechanical tinkering."

"Oh, yes, surely," agreed Polychrome, "—and all credit to you for being so law-abiding. But all that doesn't apply to me. I'm not an Ozite. And I'll need the magic for later, back in my home in the clouds, and far away from Oz."

"Oh, I agree implicitly," confirmed Wam. "I just wonder what we should do. Do you want to give up Incantology? And you were doing so well in Transubstantiation! It seems a shame. Look at the way you turned that pile of base metal into platinum. And then your exercises in Bringing to Life. I've never seen better dancing slippers—or flying buttresses—"

"Now, Mr. Wam, you promised! You weren't going to mention those buttresses again! Oh, how could I have been so stupid?"

"And *you* weren't going to be so contrite. I told you if Regent Ram shows up we'll make him some new buttresses. I too am sorry the others flew away. But don't you see: that just helps his buildings to tumble down the more. He ought to be pleased at that."

They agreed to say no more of their disastrous field trip to Tumbledown Town. But Polychrome had to return to her theme:

"How *am* I to get some training in fairy magic?" She sat down on a stump at the edge of the clearing and put her chin in her hand. Her toes kept tapping out a tango while she pondered; she couldn't help *that*.

"It's no good going to Ozma," reminded Wam. "She'd hardly give permission for magic study to anyone outside the authorized Adepts—even if you are a fairy. Besides, she's taken up these days with her wars with the Nome King."

"How are those getting on?" enquired the rainbow maiden, half preoccupied.

"Oh, all right, I suppose," dismissed Wam a bit bored. "Ozma *always* wins her wars. It's not very exciting. No suspense, if you take my meaning. One could almost wish she might lose one for a change, just to break up the odds."\*

"Okay: no applying to Ozma," resumed Polychrome. "Nor Glinda the Good Sorceress either. Same reasons. Or rather, not quite: she's just a witch, so hers would be all witchcraft, I guess."

"Though the most powerful in the world," submitted Wam.

"Oh, agreed. Just the same, I'll stick with you as far as witchcraft/wizardry/sorcery go."

"Don't forget necromancy," warned the necromancer.

"Do forgive me. Necromancy, of course. But, to get back: you know, when you think about it, there aren't all that many actual fairies *in* this fairyland."

"You're right," said Wam. "Just—let me see—just Azarine the Red and the Mist Naids—oh, and then Princess Faleero of Follensby Forest—poor thing: she's wiser than she is pretty. That's all I can think of off-hand."

"Yes, and their magic doesn't mount to all that much, does it? I read about them in my course in the Natural History of Magic. They do at least allow you to read *about* magic, if not magic itself, at Royal Athletic."

---

\*Never fear. See *The Gillikins of Oz*. Ed. note.

## THE CARELESS KANGAROO OF OZ

---

"I've noticed you always refer to Profescor Wogglebug's college that way, Lass Poly," said the wizard, digressing a bit. "Why is that? Last I heard it was called just the 'Royal College of Oz'."

"Oh, didn't you know? They have a little tradition going there now. The college isn't very old and they're short on ancient customs. With money now outlawed in Oz, they can't *buy* any tradition, as I understand they do in America. So they have to turn every little accidental happening into a ritualistic habit—"

"And as for the names?"

"Well," pontificated Poly, wearing her antiquarian's hat, "at its founding in 1906 the institution was known as the College of Art and Athletic Perfection.<sup>§</sup> But that was such a mouthful, and besides, Princess Ozma took an interest and made it a royal foundation, so they changed the name to 'the Royal College of Athletic Science'.<sup>\*</sup> That was in 1907. But by 1908 they were calling it the 'Royal College of Scientific Athletics'.<sup>\*\*</sup> Then last year they dropped the reference to sports and and it was just, tout court, 'the Royal College of Oz'.<sup>\*\*\*</sup>"

"Just so," said Wam. "The way I knew it. I like that form."

"I do too," agreed the graduate. "But by now, don't you see, tradition had set in. When I arrived the professors were at wits' ends as to what to call it this year. I noticed that sports were still the main thing there so just off the top of my head I said, 'The Royal Athletic College.'<sup>\*\*\*\*</sup> To my surprise the two were thrilled. They ended up assigning me as thesis topic 'Public Nomenclature in Oz, with a Projection for Future Denomination'."

"Fascinating," praised the wizard. "What names did you come up with for future use?"

"Extrapolating from previously used elements," pronounced Polychrome, "with elaboration plus introduction of valid new components, I proposed 'Queen's College of Sports' — I think that's

---

§ See *Ozma of Oz*.

\*See *Dorothy and the Wizard in Oz*.

\*\**ibidem*.

\*\*\*See *The Road to Oz*.

\*\*\*\*See *The Emerald City of Oz*. Editor's notes.



what they actually intend renaming it—at a big formal ceremony next time around. I'm to be guest speaker! if I'm in the country. Then for 1912 I suggested 'the Athletic Institute of Oz' and afterwards 'the Royal College of Athletics'. Later on—oh, I forget in what order— but there's 'Queen Ozma College' coming up and 'the Royal Sports Institution' and then 'the Athletic Foundation of Oz' and so on. I believe they're all fixed up for names for the next twenty years. My favorite of the ones I dreamed up is the 'College of Knowledge.'

"Hm, yes," mused Wam. "Tripping on the tongue. But you know, in time they'll surely go over to university status."

"Of course! and therewith a whole new kettle of names."

But the topic was exhausted and Poly was no nearer the solution to her dilemma. "What *am* I going to do about acquiring more magic?" she said, and stayed for an answer.

"Let me sleep on it," requested the genial necromancer.

He did, and by next morning all was clear. Of course! Polychrome had but to apply to the Queen of the Fairies herself, renowned Lurline. That near-divinity would soon tell the rain maiden what to do: whether to study with her, Lurline, or completely to give up the idea of further indoctrination into the mysteries of magic. From that tribunal there need be no attempt at recourse.

## chapter eighteen

Whee! These skis were marvelous! (Well, yes; literally.)

The Snazzy Man skimmed across the Deadly Desert in what seemed no time, being frightfully careful not to lose his balance. Even a finger-tip placed for support upon the surface of the lethal shining sands would cause the incineration of the whole person. So they said. Later on he wondered.

Was the desert really any deadlier than, for example, eggs to Nomes? This was one of the great revealed truths of Oz legends: the surrounding deserts of Oz would burn to a crisp anyone setting foot on them. However, there was not a single instance in the recorded history of that land of such a thing ever having happened. In his months of enforced idleness at the capital Shag had read up on Oz history, and he knew. Why, Princess Ozma's own transfiguration from boy to girl had taken place in a tent erected upon those very burning Sands, and everyone present at the scene was still alive to tell the tale.

And that about the eggs. His pal Dorothy had personally described to him in detail how eggs of the hen Billina, cast by the Scarecrow, had winged their way into the eyes of the baffled Nome King and produced no effect deadlier than strong annoyance.

Maybe a lot of Oz mythology was tosh, thought Shag as he slid speedily along. Nevertheless, he held himself most upright and never swerved from his straight path by a tittle, lest he overbalance.

This paid off, and he arrived safely in the Rose Kingdom or somewhere; he was going so fast he didn't notice. After that, as he continued to skim along, he felt he needn't be so rigidly careful and he did from time to time make turns when some barrier loomed up. Even so, he never fell down. After a while he grew curious, and took bigger chances. Finally he *tried* to fall down (while going less than sixty) —and couldn't! Another wonder of the magic ski-skates.

This was all very well so long as he remained on the magical continent of Sempernunquam. But afterward? Well, he'd cross that

water when he came to it.

The Snazzy Man thought he was thinking figuratively. His own experience of traveling to Oz had been over dry land exclusively. He always marveled when Dorothy retailed how she once reached the magic continent in a chicken crate tossed on the wide Pacific. It didn't all seem to add up somehow.

Only after the discovery of plate tectonics—a theoretical advance to be announced this very year—did scientists begin to understand what happened. The Sempernunquam plate simply moved much faster than any of the others; with the result that the continent ricocheted around the Nonestic Ocean like a slower billiard ball. (“Nonestic” was simply the Sempernunquam name for whatever ocean surrounded it, be it Pacific or otherwise.) When the land-mass occasionally fetched up briefly against some other coast, whether Australia, Kamchatka—or, in the experience of the Shaggy Man, apparently northern Mexico—a temporary land bridge was established. By such a one had Shag and his friends passed over.

There only remained one mystery that was never resolved. If Dorothy had set off from her Kansas home and walked more or less always in the same direction and presently arrived at the western Winkie country of Oz, then Oz must be east of America (and thus did Dorothy, from this very experience, always feel it to tie). If this strikes you as not altogether obvious, try the experiment: choose a nearby destination known to be in your east, go towards it, and see if you don't arrive at the *western* edge of that destination.

But the Pacific Ocean and whatever continents it may, under another name, or may not contain are known to be to the west of America. I can't explain it. I believe it must have something to do with the long-range magic mixing of the Kansas roads that fairy Ozma performed when she looked at the Magic Pioture and saw her little friend starting out *in the wrong direction!* to walk to Oz.

It turned out, in fact, that Shag was thinking literally. He whizzed over a last ridge and coasted down across a wide sloping sandy beach. Here was water he was going to have to

## THE CARELESS KANGAROO OF OZ

---

cross without more ado! and no bridge over it. No, indeed, for the nearest off-shore land lay on the far (he guessed: western) horizon. What was he going to do? What *was* he going to do?!

His dithering saved him: He hadn't reached any decision about what he was going to do when his swift-flying shoes hurled him at the blue brine and he found his shoes were water-skis as well! He gasped with relief, swallowed a mouthful of foam cast from the top of a billow, and dashed on. Through all vicissitudes on land and sea he held onto the empty suitcase with both hands.

That queer sea change took place again. The Snazzy Man had no clear sense of a changing of direction but presently he could tell by the position of the sun that he was skimming eastward. What had been a distant-looking landfall was now directly upon him. What action should he take?

Again he dithered, and again had the decision taken from him. This time the outcome was not unmixedly what he could have desired. The water grew shallower, he rushed toward the beach, and at the first touch of it flew head over heels and landed on his back in a mass of seaweed. His Alpine touring suit received the first of many usages that would eventually turn it into a set of shags little better than what he supposed he'd left behind forever in Oz.

Of the suitcase one side was a bit scratched where it had skidded over pebbles but otherwise the damage to it was slight. Shag got to his feet, brushed bits of kelp off his sleeves and pant-legs, and moved about a little gingerly. Then he stood still, pressed his toes down on his inner-shoe soles—and stood still.

So. Just as Glinda said might happen. It had been fifty-fifty whether the magic of the shoes would operate in northern California (where he presently learned he was). Now he knew the magic would not work.

What a long way off Kansas still was, and he without a cent in his pockets. That was nothing new, of course. Indeed, it was just like old times. Never mind. Summoning up a whistle, the (slightly less) Snazzy Man started off along and across the beach to look for a road into the interior.

Actually there was no particular rush about the man's quest. The injustice in Butterfield lay some ten years in the past. It was not going to worsen in a week, or a month, or two. As for another and equally (perhaps even more) solemn goal he had set himself: it too would not be any more hopeless if he were still another two weeks in arriving in Kansas.

Shag struck a main road at the town of Eureka. That seemed an encouraging omen. But already he had seen that his customary old slow-poking on foot was not going to avail. He couldn't take *years* to arrive in Kansas and still expect to accomplish those goals. He tried hitch-hiking.

In 1910 that was both easy and hard. People weren't terrified of ostensibly decent strangers and nearly everybody with any spare space in the big roomy automobiles of the epoch would stop to give a neatly clad walker a lift. However, there just weren't very many cars on the road and the way Shag went: obliquely south-east into the high Sierra, almost none at all.

Past Chico he turned up into the highlands and in the lonely Plumas forest had to spend the night camped out in Eureka park. The name was all right but that was all. He froze—and next morning at dawn's crack *ran* (for the sake of nearly congealed blood) along the woodland trail into which the road had devolved. He jogged all day, until at dusk he dropped down exhausted in the Donner Pass at seven thousand feet.

The man's luck changed then. He managed to hop a freight train. Oh, the blessed (comparative) warmth of a cold box-car! He fell in a corner like a poled ox and knew nothing (even during a five-hour layover in Reno) until a guard discovered him and turned him out at Fernley, Nevada.

Anyway it was blissfully mild at eleven o'clock in the morning in the permanent Nevada sun. He swallowed one of the wizard's one-a-day food pills and elected to stand by the nearby desert road until he should see the next eastbound train come along. The Snazzy Man considered that his suit still looked quite fresh, considering. Certainly the colorful suitcase gave a reliable impression. Shag took always special care that one particular side

## THE CARELESS KANGAROO OF OZ

---

of it was protected from scuffing.

And still his new luck held, and better than ever. A wholesale lumber dealer's representative from Arkansas, on a buying trip in the west, came along in a sturdy though battered Reo and took the Man aboard. They made good time and pushed on as far as Eureka that night.

The barren alkali flats of Nevada had no forests of a size to tempt Mr. Mercer to stop and dicker. Over in Utah it was different. They drove on all day and spent another night in Eureka... Utah. After that though, the Arkansas traveler wasted valuable (to his passenger) time in lumber camps up and down the Wasatch. Still, a ride towards Arkansas was not to be underrated and the Shabby Man possessed his soul in patience.

The first time or two Mr. Mercer bought his passenger a meal and Shag was properly appreciative but eventually when he never made any gesture to a return treat he got left out of the café visits. The salesman began to wonder how the other survived. There seemed to be no supply of provisions in the varicolored suitcase, for that he never saw him open. Shag made a point of not taking his nourishment pills in public.

As for lodging of nights, the double beds of the old-fashioned hotels lay as economically under two as one and the easy-going traveler made no demur. It was something to have somebody in the car on the long hauls between gas station stops and the (not too) Shabby Man could relate entertainingly from his peripathetic past.

In Colorado Shag thought his luck might have run out. No amount of searching of Mr. Mercer's road map revealed any place called "Eureka"! Still, he was glad, after so long, to be back in his home state for once.

During the week it took them to lumber-buy across the big rectangular state the (hardly) Shabby Man planned to impress his family (if he still had any) with his (almost) snazziness. One morning when Mr. Mercer's way led just forty miles from that canyon cabin where Shag had grown up he arranged with the salesman to take the day off and to rejoin him that evening.

The spring morning was fresh and invigorating as he hiked away up the long valley. At moments the Man would ask himself how he ever came to leave a place of such pristine beauty: the snow-capped jagged peaks around, the flowers by the unsullied stream, and the gentle trails of homey smoke from cabin chimneys. He begged a lunch at somebody's door and was as blissful as he ever remembered being in his hobo career.

However, the home the forty-niner had founded was no more. Shag found the roof of the old place caved in and when he asked at the next shack a half mile away the old man told him that the family was extinct. Shag's younger brother (whom he remembered an no more than a kid) had gone into the family's claim mine as usual one day about six years past and never been seen since: The blow killed the brothers' ancient mother.

The Shabby Man (all sense of snazziness gone) sat on a moss-covered boulder for along time. He was the prey of strange emotions. He hadn't cared (or really even *known*) enough about the brother (for instance, what ever was his name?!) to send a postcard in thirty years, but now the news that he might have, indeed most surely *had*, died alone and frightened in the dark moved him more than he would ever have dreamed.

Chastened, he made his way quietly back down the valley for his evening rendezvous at the hotel. He feared the news he'd had was going to trouble him for yeas to come. Some day he would have to make certain of his brother's fate.

After the Rockies it was a clear run home for Mr. Mercer. He stepped on the gas and they flew across the state line beyond Sheridan Lake. Kansas at last.

The Shabby Man had now to face a problem often recurring to hitch-hikers: where to descend from a ride that is going only tangentially toward where you want to be. There comes of course a point past which you're no longer getting nearer your destination but start moving away from it. Shag studied the map intently and then made his decision. "Okay if I get out at Eureka?"

"Sure thing." said Mr. Mercer. After a pause to reflect he added: "You sure there's where you want? As far as I remember that's

## THE CARELESS KANGAROO OF OZ

---

not any crossroads."

"No. that's all right. I'll drop off there, if I may."

And when he did so the salesman, in a last little flare-up of hospitality, said, "If you get down in northwest Arkansas, look us up. The wife'll give you a meal."

"Thanks a lot," said the hiker. "Maybe I'll do that. Where do you live?"

"Eureka Springs."

The Shabby Man almost got back in the car but decided that one Eureka (except one) was as good as another.



"Oh, by the way," said the curious kangaroo to a bystander at the Baroquean border, "which is the way to the nest of Madame Jacqueline the Jackdaw?"

"Madam Jac—I'm not sure I know who you mean," demurred the Baroquean.

Mar looked a question. "But, dear me, she's famous," she protested. "I mean: even I have heard of her, away in the south—and that's going some, because I miss plenty, living the sheltered life I've done—up 'til now."

"Jackdaw?" put in a female local who had overheard. "Why, sure. That must be old Jackie. She stole a china clothes-pin of mine right off the line! She's notorious around here. Still, I'm surprised they've heard of her... in the South, you say?"

"Well, actually," confessed the kangaroo, "it *was* some Munchkins who mentioned her there—when I was enquiring how to get in touch with the tribe of jackdaws generally."

"Jackie'll tell you that!" assured the buxom housewife. "She's a great old gossip. She picks up as much news as she does knickknacks on her flying raids. So they say. I've never had the 'pleasure' of her acquaintance." Even so, the woman knew how to direct the kangaroo in her search and the latter leapt away.

As she moved on northeast over the blue fairly-forested landscape, the marsupial was able to confirm that the thieving bird was indeed widely known, at least in that part of the world. By questions to passers-by she found her way without much trouble to the big chestnut tree where Jackie nested.

"You've lost a flock of jackdaws?" Madame Jacqueline called down. "Don't look at me. I only collect inanimate things—and then mostly just one of a kind. There's no room for more in my nest, don't you see?"

"I didn't say I'd lost them," protested the kangaroo. "I just said I wanted to find them."

"Well, you don't hunt for things unless you've first lost them, do you?" squawked the little crow, starting on a Lewis Carroll-

## THE CARELESS KANGAROO OF OZ

---

type quibble. But she was too intelligent and honest to let a fallacy stand, and she went on: "Of course you do—f you've never had them to start with... *Where* did you say you'd lost them?"

"I didn't!" pouted the other. "I never even saw them. But some other people did, and told me about them—and about you. They said you'd know where to find them."

"Hmm, 'flock of jackdaws', you say. Odd. Jackdaws don't usually run in 'flocks'. We mostly haunt church towers, you know, and there's not often room in such for 'flocks'. Incidentally, church towers themselves are not thick on the ground in Oz. You're sure they were local daws?"

"I didn't say that. I only said my friends saw a flock of jackdaws pass over—and thought one of them might have made off with something I want."

"Well, it wasn't me," declared Jackie roundly. "I hunt strictly alone."

"Of course not! I *said* it was one of a flock. Do you know of any jackdaw flocks?"

"Not in Oz," pronounced the daw definitely.

"Okay, *not* in Oz," huffed Mar. "But anywhere?"

"Obviously," huffed Jacqueline in return. "Those notorious creatures across the desert. Everybody knows about them."

"I don't! I told you I've lived out off. Tell me about them," Mar called up, with cricked neck, to her interlocutor on high.

"Oh, it's just a gang of about eight or ten, who stage raids together. I've heard they live in an enormous communal nest on a cliff-side somewhere over there—"

Mar didn't see Jackie's casual wing gesture and she said, "Over where?"

"Across the Shifting Sands—in the land of the Rampsies, I guess it is. Not so far beyond the end of the desert, apparently. I don't know; I've never been."

"How do I get there?" demanded the querulous kangaroo and pulled her pocket notebook from her pouch.

"On your legs, I guess," said Jackie annoyingly. "Oh, I see

what you mean," she relented. "Well, you couldn't do better than to leap on eastward well, southeast 'til you strike the yellow brick road. That leads on eventually to wind up at the Munchkin Gate. Through that it's further southeastering. Mind you don't burn your feet. It's hot on those sands, they say. And then well, after a while there you are, once you're off the desert."

That seemed to figure. The Winkie Fuddle-fixers who had originally told of sighting the flock had said they seemed to be flying east.

"Thanks—a *lot*," Mar said to Madame Jackie, combining sarcasm with real gratitude, and pushed off.

"Hot'?" she mulled, as she hopped along. "'Burn one's feet'?" And she glanced down at her powerfully pounding paws. "And I've been worrying about my hands!" These she looked at more carefully as she bounded along. "They *don't* seem awfully burnt," she had to admit, and this though she found it impossible to keep her forepaws tucked under her arms as she leapt. "Still, they're not as soft and dainty any more—as a lady's ought to be. Mother said you could always tell a lady by her hands." And Mar took fresh resolve to get a new pair of protective mittens as soon as she possibly could.

Her journey was uneventful. She passed through one or two of the kookie countries that lie along that road but generally tried to avoid running into people or colliding with Kalidahs—that might hold her up. Her business was not with these.

Mar arrived at the Dorothy's House National Monument one evening early and would have liked to go in and have a look at the historic place. It reminded her of her own house, and she sent a thought to distant Tronch and Melix—or was it Plonto and Zeluel? Heavens, she wasn't forgetting her own children's names? But she had always found the names difficult; they had been her husband Pea's idea—as had the children themselves.

But the monument door was locked. 'That's right,' remembered the animal. 'It says in the hagiography that Dorothy locked the door and put the key in her pocket when she left the

## THE CARELESS KANGAROO OF OZ

---

house. And nobody's been in it since.'<sup>s</sup>

Mar slept in the Munchkin custodians' tool shed (*not* looked, of course, in trusting Munchkinland) and went on her way in the morning.

As indicated, the Road led straight to the imposing granite Munchkin Gate at the outer eastern confines of the fairy kingdom. The civilized and tidy Munchkins had long ago planted, and still faithfully tended, a thick (and by now inordinately tall) hedge of privet and box (charming peppery smell!) all along the exact perimeter of their country, shutting out the view of the forbidding region beyond. Thus Mar was unsuspecting of what lay on the other Side as she pushed aside the swing wings of the gate and bounded through.

And instantly vanished.

At least: she didn't vanish to herself, of course. She could still make out her every limb as she jounced along—with quickly diminishing momentum. She merely couldn't be seen by anyone around. But as there *wasn't* anyone around, there on the trackless wastes of the Shifting Sands, Mar didn't find out that circumstance for a while—if ever.

What disconcerted her was that she couldn't see anything other than herself. She was enveloped in a world of total invisibility. It was as if she were adrift in a colorless transparent universe with simply total nothing to be seen in any direction. *Extremely* disorienting. But she was saved from complete panic by the reassuring feel of too, too solid earth beneath her feet. That told her she was *somewhere*, not simply lost in utter limbo.

The confounded kangaroo rested back on her tail and considered. Unfortunately she had not stopped soon enough and after really only minimal shifting to one side or another to try to catch a glimpse of a landmark she had completely lost all sense of direction. Now of course she would try to leap back the way she had come and hope to blunder sight unseen into the border hedge and that would guide her. But somehow already she sensed that

---

§ But that would change quite soon. See *Uncle Henry & Aunt Em in Oz*.

that ploy was not going to work. What could she, as a reasonable creature, do now?

Well, she could cry. So she did that for a while. It was refreshing and at the same time rinsed her eyes of travel dust. But in the long run it was not productive. She could panic, but Mar didn't really enjoy panicking, so she refrained. The only other possibility seemed to be to hop on until she came to something that might offer some kind of solution.

At first she thought of starving to death but that soon proved impracticable. Her sensitive nose told her where sagebrush and tumbleweeds grew in stable clefts among the sand dunes and they proved as pleasing to her palate as her native gum-tree leaves.

So the courageous kangaroo hopped. She just hopped and hopped. Then she hopped some more. Sometimes she lay down and slept. Then she hopped further. She continued to hop. She hopped continuously. After that she hopped. She was by no means hopeless.

Then one day (she had no idea what day — or after how many) she saw something. It was Professor Wogglebug of Oz.

"Nitten?!" said Prof. Wogglebug. "Nitten nye kvindelige elever! Er du sikker—" Then he broke off and blushed brown, remembering where he was.

Where he was was in front of his little class in Danish and he had been in the middle of a lively exposition of Syntagmatic Patterning in Stød—in the original, of course; this was his very advanced group—when the message came.

"Nineteen?" he started over. "Did you say nineteen new co-eds?"

"Yes, sir," said Fex. "At least, I'm pretty sure that's what they want. They were all talking at once, you see, and I couldn't be quite certain but I caught the words 'study' and classes' several times. And then I heard one of them say your name—so I brought them to you."

"Where are they?"

"Downstairs in the hall. If you would just have a word with them," the young registrar's-assistant essayed, "that is: if you can *get* just *a* word." The youth liked a bit of a pleasantry.

The wogglebug flew downstairs. Literally. After all, nineteen pretty (well, it stood to reason they were *pretty*) girls should not be kept waiting. His expectation was not deceived. There milled the bevy, and they *were* pretty. Oddly, they all looked alike; they also all looked like Polychrome, his ex-pupil.

At once the professor knew where he was. Deftly he took control. "Ladies!!... My dear young ladies! Silence, I beseech you. I shall speak, and when I have spoken I shall ask *one* of you to reply.

"Now then: I recognise you—with delight, I should say—as siblings of our late student—and, I might add, dear friend—Miss Polychrome Rainbowsdaughter. She often spoke of her charming sisters—although I did not fully grasp that the number of you ran to nineteen. I think my colleague, Mr. Fex, mentioned nineteen—" That was as far as he got. The excited girls broke in, though anyway one at a time for greater intelligibility.

"Of course nineteen!" cried Aurora.

"How many did you think?: eighteen?" put in Iris saucily.

"Or maybe just twelve?" wondered Vattenande.

"Never mind that! State our business," perempted Prism.

"It's our sister!" hastily supplied Opal.

"Polychrome," inserted Raduga, just to be sure.

"Yes; where is she?" said Arcenciel, who liked asking leading questions.

"Dad's frantic," declared Tien Kang.

"He can't think where she's got to," stated Naiad.

"Of course he knows she set out to get a college education—" began Alouette, but Pluvia broke in:

"All of us know that!"

"Admittedly, she never said for how long," confessed Curcubeu.

"—she'd be gone, that is," supplemented Sateenkaari.

"But she acted like it was just going to be a few days," informed Regenvlaag.

"Or anyway no more than a couple of weeks," added Aquarelle.

"But now it's been four months!" indicted Lucy, getting to the heart of the matter.

"Actually, longer than that," corrected Farvespil.

"More like five months by now," constated Arcobaleno.

"Yes, and we're all worried sick," summed up Roong, who preferred to be last.

"I see," intoned the Dean and looked wise. "Yes indeed, certainly you have cause to be concerned. But I'm incredulous! You mean Polychrome never wrote in all the months she was with us?" But then, clapping his feeler to his forehead, "Of course! How stupid of me! There's no mail delivery on the rainbow."

"Anyway we can't read," stated Naiad bluntly.

"But how perfectly awful!" cried the professor in real distress. "I can see you, all of you, would be distraught. Here, Fex! run at once to the cafeteria and bring a tray of refreshments."

"Yes, sir!"

"No, better make that 'trays'! You girls will want something

## THE CARELESS KANGAROO OF OZ

---

strengthening... Let's go into the common room. Oh, and Fez—" he called after the hurrying office-boy— "send word up to my class they're dismissed. *You* come right back."

"Yes, *sir!*" assured Fex and hastened off. He had no intention of remaining long away from the company of nineteen carbon copies of the girl of his dreams.

The professor too was still struck by the likeness of all the girls and as they tripped along after him he enquired of Vattenande—or, no, was it Regenvlaag?:

"Are you girls vigintuplets?"

The rainbow maiden looked a question but she didn't like to articulate her ignorance before a professor.

"I mean:" inserted the wogglebug, "were all of you born at the same time... all twenty at once? You're so very much alike."

"Oh, no," assured Regenvlaag. "All at different times. But we all have the same father and mother. Maybe that accounts for it."

The dean smiled to himself. "It surely has *something* to do with it." Then he made conversation about the girls' parents and expressed again (as he had on occasion to Polyhrome herself) his wonderment that the offspring of Mother Earth and Daddy Rainbow should appear to have the form of human beings.

"Oh, that's only to human beings, of course," informed the girl. "I think I'm right in saying that. I've never met any human beings before today—and yet it seems I'm able to talk your language. But when happy little bluebirds fly beyond the rainbow, why, we can talk to them as readily. I guess we appear as bluebirds to bluebirds!"

"Yes, and as storks to storks—and vultures to vultures," put in Opal, who had eavesdropped, and who happened to recall conversations with members of those two species.

These fascinating speculations absorbed the professor and those nearest him until they were seated in the common room. Then Fex—and President Nowitall, who had been borrowing paper-clips when the sub-registrar checked in at the office for a moment—entered with the trays of turkey sandwiches (a favorite of Polychrome's) and—but let Fex tell it:



"There were no dewdrops left, ladies, after the cloudburst that announced your arrival. But I've brought cups of fresh raindrops and I hope they'll 'dew'." He waited for the acknowledging laugh but only Arcenciel caught the pun. That was enough, however, to encourage Fxx to sit down next to her and presently to dare to hold her hand.

"I'm sorry there were no cloud-cakes," diffided Professor Nowitall. "I trust these feather-wafers will serve instead. They're the cook's speciality."

When all had been served, Aurora, appointing herself spokeswoman, pursued: "Father Rainbow has given us just one day in which to find out what's become of our sister. Please, Professor, relieve our suspense. We feel sure that nothing *bad*—"

"Oh, perish the thought, my dear!" cried Wogglebug in consternation. "We all of us at R.A.C. adore your sister. None would allow a hair of her head..." The prof ran through a litany of reassurances and then told the rainbow girls what had happened. Polychrome had gone on to do postgraduate studies with the learned Wizard Wam. If she hadn't reported back to the rainbow yet, why, that simply meant...

The maidens got to their feet, six or seven with regret, because this was the first earthly luncheon party they had ever been to and they were enjoying the treat.

"We must be off with all haste to this Mr. Wam," declared Aurora. "Professor, will you provide his address?"

"Oh, dear ladies," cried the wogglebug in distress, "please sit down, I entreat you—and finish your refreshments." Eight or nine at once did so. "The wizard isn't resident here locally! He lives right across the country, at least a full day's journey from here, maybe two. I don't see how—"

He broke off when, to his dismay, he saw Aurora burst into tears. "We've failed!" she wailed. "Dad's going to be terribly upset. We were hoping so desperately to make good. It might have been the start, don't you see?, of being allowed off the rainbow often. It's all been such fun but now we'll never..." She broke down completely.

## THE CARELESS KANGAROO OF OZ

---

A group of her sisters condoled with her while the rest looked at the Ozite reproachfully. Arcenciel pointedly withdrew her hand from Fex's. Sateenkaari said, "If only *we* had some magic! As it is, we couldn't get there in time, *walking*, even if we are fairies."

And Farvespil said, "Whatever are we going to do?"

Professor Wogglebug rose to the occasion. "It's true, I fear. Even on your light fairy feet you couldn't get to Wizard Wam's place while it's still light and after dark—"

"No rainbows!" mourned Prism and she too began to weep.

"Return to your rainbow, my dear girls," urged the bug, "—after you've finished your collation—"

"Quite a while after," interrupted Iris. "Dad's sending a small shower at five o'clock to pick us up."

"Oh, well; fine. Meanwhile young Fex here will give you a guided tour of the campus—"

"Yes, sir," agreed the youth.

"—while I myself *fly* to Wam's and ascertain—"

"Oh, professor, *would* you?" Aurora lifted a lovely tear-stained face, now beaming like the dawn.

"Neither will I be able to be back before late tomorrow or next day. But shall we say?: on the third day hence, if the Lord of the Rainbow cares to arrange for a small downpour, I'll have definite word of your Polychrome. With any luck, the errant lady herself..."

So it was decided, and the party broke up amid general gratification. The wogglebug lost no time in launching himself into space. He had merely to change his tail-coat and breeches for his flying togs and away he wafted and was soon out of sight, to the waving of nineteen handkerchiefs.

He struck a favorable tail-wind and was carried over blue forests and a few fields until just at dark he was able to make out the great opaque shape of the inflatable barn-hostel on the property of the Wizard Wam. It loomed impressively, even from a height, against the lighter dark of the grassy ground.

"Miss Polychrome?" gasped the wizard at his door, following the academic's polite knock. "Oh, gosh you've missed her. You mean she didn't let anyone know?" he went on—with quite a bit

of hypocrisy. "Well, what a shame. The naughty young woman. Why yes, she did splendidly in her studies with me, and then she went on to the Witoh of the North to see what she had to contribute... Oh, let's see, that would be about two weeks ago now. But, please, my dear Professor, I'm forgetting my manners. Do step in..."

The upshot of the invitation was that Wogglebug who was not that much of a specialist at night-flying spent the dark hours at Wam's and was off at first light.

Over hill and purple dale he flew and then he came down at the location Wam had indicated: the clearing in the brooding violet forest before the hut-studio of Tattypoo, good witch of the North. A moment before landing he glimpsed a dragon in the back garden so, after ringing at the front door and getting no response, the insect strolled around that way.

It was Agnes, Tattypoo's familiar, and in her rubber gloves she was hanging up the wash. "Good day," spoke the wogglebug, and Agnes with a start turned and responded in kind.

"I seek the good witch Tattypoo," said the professor. "I hope she is not from home."

"Well, there," said the dragon, "I'm afraid she *is* from home. Something came up—what was it now? Anyway, she had to go consult the witch-queen, Zixi of Ix—oh, the better part of a week ago. I'm expecting her home any day now—"

"Any *day*! Oh, gracious," whirled the bug, "I'm afraid I haven't got 'days'. I'll have to go after her. Queen Zixi, you say? Yes, I know the way. Thank you so much. I won't keep you." And the professor moved to an open space between toadstool beds and in a twinkling lifted off into the purple. Agnes scratched her head and looked after him, wondering what that was all about.

It is unfortunate that the wogglebug was so precipitate, not staying to enquire if the witch had a companion on the occasion of her departure. Instead, he hummed to himself as he flew away: "So: Polychrome in getting the full treatment. First studies with Wam, and then with the Northern witch, and now Zixi to boot. She's going to have the whole spectrum of magic before she's done.

## THE CARELESS KANGAROO OF OZ

---

The whole of *witch* magic, that is... Hmm.” He was pensive for a bit. ‘But being after all a fairy,’ he pondered, ‘oughtn’t she to be assimilating some *fairy* magic?!’

Ix lay more or less straight north so Wogglebug plotted his course via the marble Gillikin Gate. After three hours of steady flight he came down over the mountains and sighted the structure. There was, however, no reason to land, so he flew right over it and on. It seemed to him the desert beyond looked strangely white and featureless but he thought nothing of it at the time. Though a professor, the insect could be absent-minded occasionally and now it had quite slipped his mind that Glinda and Ozma in concert had made certain rearrangements affecting the territory beyond the confines of Oz.

The result was that he continued to fly. After what seemed a very long time he thought he ought to be getting over land beyond the desert. The unvarying sun-bleached whiteness of the sky and the undifferentiated blank surface of the so-called Impassable Desert were proving disorienting. From the feel of his wing tendons maybe this desert *was* impassable. He decided to land and reconnoitre.

But where was the land? He felt morally certain there was earth down below, and the force of gravity, the tensions of body muscles, his sense of equilibrium and a light headache when he flew for any length of time upside-down—informed the bug of where “below” was. But he didn’t want to risk a crash landing. He spread his wings wide and coasted in an ever so gradual descent.

Well thought upon—and managed. Before long the bug lay with knees and chin in soft sand. Sand?! He sat up with a start. He felt about with three or four chelae. It was a very powdery sand, more like dust. Maybe that helped to make the desert impassable, for walkers.

But he ought not still to be in the desert! By now he must have flown many miles beyond the reach an of that. Anyway it now came to him that, no matter where he was, it was invisible. He could not see the sand-dust he rubbed between his feelers. He might well be in some *other*, isolated, dust-desert,

in Ix, or wherever...

The memory of what Oz's rulers had planned for circumventing future invasions of their country came back to him with awful and complete clarity.

Great Isosceles! what was he to do now?

The good wogglebug panicked just a little. His arduous flight(s) had fatigued him, he felt ravenously thirsty, and he could do with a bite to eat as well. It came to him that to lift himself into the air again could avail nothing; nothing more than the last four or five hours' flying had availed, and that was zilch. He would in short order merely exhaust himself.

After a little quiet desperation he lay still. Going mad wasn't going to help. Good sense came to his rescue. First, if he could forget the tortures of thirst and hunger, he would sleep. That in itself would contribute materially to renewing his forces. After that he would see maybe only figuratively, but just the same...

As planned, so done. After the sleep the bug set off crawling (to conserve his strength). He crawled slowly and methodically. He crawled unagitatedly. He crawled a long time—in as straight a line as total directionlessness would allow. He crawled and crawled. Presently he came upon something on the dusty ground that felt (uncomfortably) like cactus. The well-read academic knew how in a pinch cactus could provide both meat and drink for a desperate traveler. He circumvented the spines as best he could and had a lengthy chew. Afterwards he crawled on, somewhat restored. He crawled longingly. He crawled exceedingly. He crawled at last desperately.

And all this while he saw nothing (except himself and portions thereof), except once or twice, incredibly, when he fancied he caught sight of a bird flying over. He crawled through invisibility, now fearing seriously for his sanity. He was hallucinating! Birds yet! where all else was void. He crawled more; his strength grew less, he now hallucinated badly, because he thought he saw—a kangaroo!

The white cat purred.

This really was rather nice. Could you blame her for not leaving it all behind? The comfortable quarters, the regular meals, the freedom from onerous duties, the almost obsequious cordiality of the old woman? Admittedly the latter was a fright to look at but Eureka firmly believed that handsome was as handsome did. She opened one eye.

It was early yet but the hag was brandishing with that broom again. Where did all the dust (and sometimes ashes) come from? It seemed to be connected with the operations that at times went on behind locked doors in the strange-looking scullery off the kitchen. Eureka had more than once of a morning noticed unaccounted-for heaps of residue in the kitchen fireplace as well.

Well, she wouldn't disturb the woman at those labors. Eureka went back to sleep, idly wondering what was afoot. She had discovered that Miss Gulch was quite house-proud: spent rather a lot of time in tidying and beautifying. But today's excesses in that direction seemed—well, excessive.

Such would be less inexplicable if the woman ever had visitors in to see the display of pristinity, but she did not. Eureka began to understand her own welcome more. The old hag must be perishing of loneliness. Never mind: Eureka didn't mind offering a little companionability now and then. All the more off-putting then that: she was locked out of the transactions that went on in the scullery. But, for a cat, Eureka was fairly incurious and she did not pry.

Still, it *was* mysterious what that stuff in the fireplace might be. Eureka had poked it with a tentative paw. Animal?; it didn't smell like it. Vegetable?; it didn't taste like it. Mineral?; it didn't feel like it. She dabbed at it again. How queer. It seemed to shift slightly—but sort of all-in-one-piece. She took the other paw to it. *didn't* it move just a wee bit? Yes, decidedly. The mass was moving, very faintly, on its own!

This would never do. Something alive in the fireplace? As self-

appointed custodian of whatever vermin might infest the premises, Eureka could not allow anything to reside undisturbed in the fireplace. She patted the emerging blob with one paw and then the other.

The glob of whatever it was now definitely self-adhered in one large soft shape. The cat grew fascinated. Was this what the old woman had been working on; now belatedly taking shape, becoming an apport of some sort? A viable entity (though Eureka's vocabulary perhaps scarcely went so far as to be able to describe it in those terms)?

This was fun! The more the cat patted the shape the more it metamorphosed. The indeterminate color of what had started out an brown-grey-whitish ashes (as she supposed one must call them, though the mass had all along seemed more plastic than ash) was now coalescing into definite spots of color. There was a greyish-blue patch, there a clear white, and — what? — was that a glimpse of her favorite pink? She must be dreaming.

The idle pastime became a sport. The patting became a batting. The harder she hit the quicker the thing changed. It was rising up! Each blow sent it higher, and as it extended upwards it shrank in laterally. Now the blob was definitely taller than wide, sitting there on the tiles four-square.

"Sitting?" Suddenly the sport became a frenzy. Filled with a fantastic boding the cat batted the amorphous shape furiously, and with each blow the premonition became more of a certainty. In a magically short time the gleaming form of the life-size pug sat there on the now clean-swept-appearing hearth.

Eureka crouched, each hair erect. The bulging blue eyes of the pug seemed to collect themselves from distant space, move, and come to rest on the cat. The mouth opened wide in a great yawn. And then in a high squeaky lah-di-dah voice the pug dog said:

"Comme tu m'as bien battu, mon coeur!"

"Oh, lord, a Frenchy," sighed the cat in an exasperated growl.

"Of course French," said the pug disdainfully. "What else? One is careful about one's antecedents."

Eureka sighed again—in relief. "But you speak English any-

way. That's something."

"It's a useful tool, so one acquires it—nothing more. Everyone has talked it around me for longer than I can remember."

With infinite caution the dog-shape was relaxing from its upright stance and subsiding down to lie full-out on the hearth tiles. "Oh, now *there's* relief," it exhaled squeakily. "I've been sitting up correct and proper for seventy years that I know of. How I've *longed* to lie down." Slowly, as if with an effort, the figure closed one eyelid at Eureka. "Viens! Couche-toi auprès de moi."

Eureka had small Latin and less French but she understood well enough what the pug meant. She took a step forward

Wham! A door slammed and the cat woke up. One leap and she was at the top of the attic stairs. Two more and she was at the bottom. She hightailed it toward the kitchen. Damn! the grocery boy had been in and she had missed him. The visit of the grocer's cart was the event of the week. How had she been so stupid as to have overslept?

Just so: there was old Miss Gulch with both arms loaded, staggering to the big deal table. Eureka went to help. This consisted of leaping onto the rocking chair and being careful not to set it tilting while she put one paw up tentatively on the table edge. Even so favored an inmate of the house as Eureka knew the actual table top was off limits for promenades.

Now began the delightful ceremony of the distribution of provisions. Some dull things in prepackaged sacks and tins were placed on cupboard shelves. A hink of something that sloshed delightfully (Eureka had learned that this was the source of the curds and whey) was stowed in the coolness of the little cellar. Other matters loosely wrapped in parchment paper were left 'til last.

These were what drew the cat. Already she was purring in anticipation. The temptation was awful. Eureka looked round. Where *was* the woman? She'd better get back directly or Eureka would not be responsible. Her roving eye caught two things. The black hole of the kitchen fireplace looked strangely—what?—tidily brushed and neat but—empty. Now what did that...? The other thing was a book lying open on the work-table. Cabalistic



formulas, no doubt, sniffed the cat, then, paused to glance again. No! it was a cookbook. What on earth! Miss Gulch never cooked by recipes. Whatever was going on? And all this house-cleaning from the dawn on. Something was afoot.

Miss puss was not left long in ignorance. Miss Gulch came briskly into the room, rubbing her hands down her apron. She said, "I'm running late! My nephew's coming to lunch. Now stand out of the way like a good cat. I must make the fat fly."

She jerked open the paper wrappings and revealed the pile of liver, the pound of butter, the half-flitch of bacon which the cat's soul had already divined.

What did she say?: a nephew coming to lunch? At Miss Gulch's, who never served lunches or had visitors? Great day! The world was turned upsidedown.

The woman talked on. Another excuse for one's keeping a cat was to be able to talk aloud to oneself under the pretense of having an auditor. "Yes, I had a letter." (That in itself was enough of an event, but it was true: Eureka herself had noticed the mail-man hovering in the road one day lately.) "He's passing through K.C. and said he could give me an afternoon. Gracious—it's been years! Since before I retired. He's never seen me in this house. I wonder what he'll think. Hmmm, I'd better keep mum about my —'experiments'... He's a poet! but I never knew of such having money to travel about. Maybe that's it: he thinks a timely visit here might do to insure an inheritance from me..." The woman cackled very like a beldam. "Still, he used to be a nice boy. We'll see."

Some butter was put to frizzle in a pan on the range, as the woman cut thin slices from the liver. One such, three inches long, she waved, unwisely, before the nose of the cat. "There *may* be something for you—afterwards." Eureka found this behavior too familiar, even if she herself *was* regarded as a familiar.

Eight fine strips were cut from the end of the bacon before Miss Gulch hung it by its string from a ceiling hook. The cat looked aloft and pondered whether a leap in the dark of night would avail anything. Miss Gulch smeared with the knife end a minus-

## THE CARELESS KANGAROO OF OZ

---

cule dab of butter on the oilcloth cover within reach of Eureka's tongue, before laying the loaf of it aside for ultimate deposition in the ice chest. This was cruel and infelicitous treatment, snarled the cat inwardly as she condescended to lick the cloth. Outwardly the snarl emerged as a rather staccato purr.

Afterwards the beldam's attention was elsewhere as she blended ingredients and bent to place a casserole dish in the Dutch-oven. To remind her mistress of her at all, Eureka had to drop to the floor and sashay before her, stretching herself out with claws extended and rump high. Even then it resulted only in an insufficient lump of the congealed clabber being fetched from the can in the pool-cellar and slopped indifferently upon a saucer on the hearth. The old witch was trying to incite her, Eureka'd be bound! Still, she pretended to be gratified and purred loudly.

A heavenly aroma came from the oven. Some of the ingredients of the dish had still not been rewrapped and stowed in their appointed places when a loud rasping tinkle broke the near-silence of the room. Miss Gulch gave a brief scream. "Belles of Blocksberg! That'll never be Ted! He's ages too early."

She gave her hand a hasty fumble in her apron, smoothed her hair with too-liverish fingers, and left the kitchen. The explanations at the door took too long: an earlier train, a walk that did not take as much time as expected, the need to curtail the visit at its other end. "But look at this, Aunt Almira: my volume of verse just off the press. You're the first to get a copy!"... All this took valuable time, time that could not be afforded.

For when the couple entered the kitchen for the hostess to check on lunch, they came too late. Too late! Those sad, sad words.

The table top was a shambles. No one noticed the white tail quickly disappearing past the screen door, in the horror of discovery of buttered foot prints everywhere together with remainders of liver in the form of trifling serape and shreds where they had been abandoned as well and truly chewed.

"That cat!" shrieked Miss Gulch and was nigh to fainting. Hastily Ted pumped a glass of water at the sink and gave her to drink where she sat, collapsed, in the rocking chair. "Oh, I should have

known! Taking in a stray that way. They can never be trusted. I've warned that animal off the table a hundred times. I thought she'd learned —"

"A cat, Aunt Almira?" Ted tried to calm her with an approach from another angle. "That's new."

"Well, I wanted something living around the place. The chickens are no company. Then this creature showed up, meowing around the back door. It seemed a pretty little thing." Miss Gulch was not being quite candid. She scanted reference to an actual *need* of a cat as standard equipment in her chosen new metier. "Well, I took her on. But I never dreamed of *this* —" She went on to render a minute description of the circumstances of the crime.

Ted listened indulgently, with a little smile just invisible around his mouth. At last he summed up: "Never mind. The lunch is saved — if my nostrils mistake me not."

"Great Powers!" cried his aunt and started to her feet. "The casserole will be like a cinder!" and she darted to the oven. But it was not.

The luncheon party was a success despite the disaster. To display his powers, as well as to pass the final hour, after family gossip had died away and before his train went, Ted composed in his aunt's admiring presence this sonnet:

"A pussy cat had wakened with the day  
But snoozed again when she remarked the chore  
Her mistress was embarked upon in May  
In their pink clapboard dwelling by the shore.  
When she awoke again she found a book  
Had now engaged the dame. It was a study  
That she was making, starting in to cook,  
And for those purposes her hands were bloody.  
It was a pound of liver, there was butter,  
And bacon strips as well that drew the cat.  
Her interest in her mistress made her stutter.  
Her deep devotion made her stretch quite flat.  
Her purring deafened as she sought to sing.  
And then, oh joy!, she heard the doorbell ring.

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

“You’ve promised, Wizard.”

“Yes, my dear, the Queen is not to know of your work—nor any of the other Adepts. And *you* have promised not to work wonders in Oz; only elsewhere, in other magic lands and perhaps in the outside world, or, if occasion requires, in the sky—or under ground.”

Polychrome uttered a bell-like peal of laughter. “‘Under ground’! It’ll be the first subterranean rainbow in history then. But, Wam, seriously: if anyone comes asking, you’ll not tell where I am? I’m so afraid if Daddy once gets me home I’ll never be able to come away again and complete my studies. And without them I’ll never feel worthy of my love.” The rainbow maiden had a disconcerting way of revealing to just about everybody her infatuation for an unsuitable itinerant earthling.

More or less in jest the wizard gave his word. Poly, if all went well, would have an intensive short course in Fairy lore at the court of the very Queen herself of all the fairies and then she would hurry home, equipped in body and mind to meet her lover on an equal footing whenever an occasion could be arranged.

Master and pupil parted in most cordial friendship and Wam teleported Miss Polychrome to the Quadling Gate of Oz. Teleportation was one of his specialties but it gave him a pang to practice it once again (*quite* illegally). It brought back memories of his lost boy, who had been his telemessenger in times gone by.<sup>§</sup>

The Rainbow’s daughter passed through the imposing red rock gate and found herself upon the spreading sands of the comparatively innocuous Great Waste. She looked around her with some interest. It was not that often that rainbows appeared on deserts. She recalled her thrilling sand-boat ride across the threatening Deadly Desert\*, but this was all so different. Here she was on her own and actually physically treading on the sands. As it happened,

---

§ See *Uncle Henry & Aunt Em in Oz*.

\*See *The Road to Oz*. Editor’s notes.

Polychrome didn't know enough to be aware that, by all intentions, she oughtn't to be able to see a thing!

The recent alteration of the state of the nation had in fact not been publicly proclaimed by wonderworkers Osma and Glinda. Yet neither did they make a secret of it. They merely reasoned that people would find out all in good time through personal experience that Oz had become invisible to the outside world, and vice versa. And if people did *not* find out, what matter?

Polychrome, however, was a fairy: a very special type of fairy, a rain nymph, of which there are perhaps not so many as of common or garden-bottom fairies who teem in their myriads. Howsomever, they are all fairies and as such were not affected by a local and private enchantment such as that which had lately been evoked here. Creatures which are all along invisible in the great world to men cannot become *more* invisible. Their status remained unchanged under the conditions of the new dispensation and Polychrome could see on the desert as well as ever she had been able.

Now was the time to put to use some of what she had learned from Wam. She pronounced certain charms, made certain gestures, and in an instant was flashing faster than the speed of light over the great waste to the land beyond. Here the magic dumped her down in the thick thyme-scented verdure of a grassy dell. So far so good.

When the girl had shaken herself down from her impetuous passage through the air and taken a few dance steps to be sure she was still sound in wind and limb, she ran up a hill to spy from its summit. Yes, there on the horizon to the south were the leafy approaches to the grandest deepest forest on all the magic continent.

It stood to reason that the Queen of all the Fairies would not hold court in just any old woods: In the first place, though powerful *everywhere* she would naturally choose to make her domicile in that one area of the earth's surface generally admitted to be the most magical of all. Then, on that continent, where would she elect to live but in the secretest deep heart of the greateat region

## THE CARELESS KANGAROO OF OZ

---

of protective off-warding trees to be found anywhere? Fairies had nothing to fear from anyone but just the same it was nice to be at home in one's own most secret glade where no intrusions need be expected as one spun moonbeams and wove magic cloaks and gave artisans asses' heads and so on.

Polychrome was feeling just a little anxious as she entered the precincts of the forest. What if the great Lurline were to take umbrage at a rainbow maiden's boldly coming into her presence with elaborate demands and *without* any proper introductions (other than a word-of-mouth one from a mere mortal wizard)? Still, Poly wasn't going to get all souciant about that. The queen could but send her on her way with a flea in her ear. There was no punishment for card-carrying fairies' daring to approach the ruler of them all.

As it happened, the rain maiden's careless charm and darting dancing ways were just what the somewhat jaded fairy queen could use at the moment. She and all her band were feeling blue because, since that strange expedition which ended in the invention of the later famous Woozy of Oz\*, the little pixy Dementia had retreated into a mood of abashed reclusion and no longer delighted her fairy companions with her amusing notions and naive conversation. When one is a fairy thousands of years old—if not millions—any new thing is grasped at avidly, but when that new thing's charm wears thin one is more bored even than before. As for the proper fairies themselves, Espa and Ereol and all that crowd, they had ages since done and said every new thing any of them was capable of. Polychrome's bright advent was like rain in the desert, or, in this case, forest.

"To study magic, my dear?" said Lurline from her throne on an enormous gilt-edged toadstool. "But as a bona fide fairy surely you know a deal of magic already."

"No, Your Fayship!" exclaimed Poly, aggrieved afresh at the recollection. "Daddy would never teach us a thing. What did we want with magic? he said. Our home was in the clouds and it was

---

\* See *In Other Lands than Oz*. Editor's note.

never envisaged we should leave it. On the rainbow he himself could do all the magic that needed doing: creating pots of gold, for instance, to rest his feet in, and making troubles melt like lemon drops. All we girls were expected to do was dance like crazy and look lovely, so we all grow expert at those things, but that's all."

Very soon the whole intrigue had come out. Lurline looked grave when she heard about the fairy's love for a mortal but even so she said, "A conversance with magic is your birthright, my girl. It isn't proper that it's been kept from you. As for young Ozma's embargo on thaumaturgy in her own dominions, that's her affair; it's nothing to do with you. You're not a native of Oz, nor like to be, unless you marry this naturalized immigrant Ozite you speak of..."

Polychrome blushed various shades of crimson. Even in her wildest dreams—and sometimes, very occasionally, they were a *little* wild—she had never allowed herself to contemplate matrimony. She stuttered in her confusion and succeeded in saying nothing.

"Besides," went on queen Lurline, "you've already, you say, taken a vow not to practice magic within Oz, so that's all right. Why in the world shouldn't you learn the art? It will be a diversion for us to take you on as our pupil."

"Oh, Your Fayness," cried the enraptured girl, "how super!" She fell into slang in her exuberance. "I'll be ever so good and diligent. You won't regret it, I do assure you."

"That's all right, dearie," dismissed the fairy queen calmly. "I have every confidence in you. As for the studies themselves, I can implant knowledge of every breach of fairy lore in your mind with a wave of the wand, but I wonder if that's what we any of us want..."

"Oh, your fayness!" moaned all thirty-one of the fairy band at once. "Do, we pray you, not do any much thing! Where would be the fun of that?"

Polychrome herself was of two minds. It *would* be neat to grab an entire education in magic in moments and beat a hasty retreat to the realm of her father Rainbow, about whom she was getting a

very guilty conscience. But she had had a glimpse of the amusing pastimes of the sylph society and she rationalized that it would not make her disaffection to her dad look very much worse if she were to stay a few days among the fairy sisters. What fun it would be, practicing giving artisans asses' heads in the company of people who knew all about it. Better still, if she were to learn how to *remove* asses' heads! What an impression she could make on her dear-Shaggy Man, who a scant nine months ago had had that very problem! She decided to stay.

As for father: with all the magic implicit around her here, surely he could be sent a message by some sorcery manner: 'Don't fret; home directly.'



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

The Shabby Man was thinking of Australia. He found himself doing that a lot lately... ever since that comical kangaroo had so curiously and compellingly brought the great island to mind. Naturally he thought at the same time of Dorothy Gale. After all, it was for her sake he was making this quest—both directly and indirectly. ‘Indirectly’ because this pesky conscience that had come alive (indirectly her fault!) needed to be clear for her sake. And ‘directly’ because that evening on the street in Sydney—

Whups! another car stopping, a big black Kissel Kar. How incredible the luck had been, ever since California! But no, he reminded himself, it wasn’t incredible at all. Wasn’t he wearing the Love Magnet? It was so powerful that one glance towards its wearer by a driver made brakes slam on instantly. Afterwards people would say to each other: “Now why did we stop for that old tramp? We never do.”

For it could not be denied that after two weeks on the road without a razor (Mr. Mercer’s amiability didn’t extend that far) the once Snazzy Man’s face was going on for as shaggy as of old. After the nights in woods and box-ogre and on the salesman’s back seat, not to mention the one spent just now in a corn-crib outside Emporia, the formerly brilliant demi-Alpine outfit was one great wrinkle. Shag just hoped it wouldn’t be any worse by the time he stood in front of Miss Penelope—or Mrs. Carmichael, as he supposed she was now.

The Kissel Kar took him right to Topeka. It had been the man’s intention, before the ski-skates proved disappointing outside of Faerie, to go at once to the Topeka bank and make an enquiry respecting the cat unfortunately left behind when the Mankato-Gale ranch had been temporarily vacated some weeks before. (No point in getting involved in the legalities of who actually owned the farm now that Dorothy’s relatives had decamped forever.) But now his appearance made him hesitate and then the chance was lost. The family were heading for St. Joseph, Missouri, and so the Shabby Man stayed with them until the next crossroads.

## THE CARELESS KANGAROO OF OZ

---

To walk along this road again! Who would have supposed last summer that he would be coming on a *second* quest this way within so short a time? Would it too be crowned with success? Shag felt his heart beating unaccustomedly just a little faster than he thought of the two hurdles he aspired to clear in just a little while now.

He went along the dusty road and it all came back to him like yesterday. The apparent accidental meeting at the fence before the farmhouse. The strange coincidence that Butterfield should lie so close by: a perfect handle to hang an introductory conversation on, even though Butterfield was the last place he thought of going to just then. Those apples he had stolen! Well, so it turned out, they came in handy as provender later on. But there'd be no apples in May.

How absent-minded he had appeared, stumbling over little humps in the soil as he and the girl crossed the field. If someone could have guessed what a turmoil his mind was in, someone would have been very much surprised. He almost gave himself away when he confessed that he had no intention of going to Butterfield. "Nowhere really," he had answered when the girl asked what his actual destination was. Well, he couldn't admit that he had *just reached* his real destination!

That whole adventure had been unique: the only one he knew of where the goal was reached in the first chapter, why, on the first page so that all that came after was pure anticlimax.<sup>§</sup> But later judges agreed: it was the least compelling of all Oz adventures.

There was the farmhouse now, looking not much different from how he remembered it. Not that he had given it more than a glance. He had had eyes only for something else. Even the apple tree he would not have noticed except by reason of the fact that Dorothy disappeared for a moment. The dog: that yapping appendage of the young girl had appeared at the moment of the apple theft. What did the dog care? Dogs didn't eat apples. *They* were more attracted by bedroom slippers and book bindings. To get rid of the nuisance Shag had stuffed it in his pocket among the apples,

---

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

wishing that he might meet an amiable dog for a change. Why did they always bark so ferociously at harmless tramps?

Had there been any cat on the scene? If there was, the Shaggy Man could well believe it spent its time in the tops of trees, or the farther corners of attics and cellars, when a yapper like that held the fort. Certainly Dorothy had never mentioned any kitten of hers—from that day to this. It was only from the lass's friends in Oz that Shag knew that any such little white cat existed.

The picket gate was not bolted, or wired fast. The Shabby Man crossed the neglected lawn. Hmm: as was to be expected, the bank lawyers had been here and secured the doors against intruders. Same story all around the house *and* the slanting trap to the storm-cellar steps.

But Shag was not a tramp for nothing. He soon had the kitchen window open and the freedom of the premises. Business-like he unlatched the Oz-flag suitcase on the kitchen table. Here was why he had gathered no moss, *or* rolling stones, as souvenirs on his trek from California. His new-found yen to collect was going to be sacrificed, this trip, to the welfare of Princess Dorothy. He would fill the carry-all with mementos for her from her old home. Well, partly fill! He wasn't going to load it so heavy he couldn't lug it any further.

The kitchen, however, yielded items of possible interest only to the girl's Aunt Em: He took a few: a potato peeler, a darning egg, a curling iron. Who knew what the woman might miss in Oz? The Shaggy Man was not that well acquainted with her. From the parlor, and in a curious little compartment, no bigger than a closet, which the man surmised had served the farmer as an office, he picked up two corn-cob pipes, a filled tobacco pouch, and a paperknife. He paused at a mahogany humidior, unexpected note of self-allowed luxury, but regretfully decided it was too big.

Upstairs at the doorway to Dorothy's virginal bedroom the man stopped still in awe. To enter seemed like a violation. But somebody had entered. Somebody, Aunt Em or another, had pulled down the shades, so that the strong sun would not bleach things more than had happened already. The Shaggy Man tip-

## THE CARELESS KANGAROO OF OZ

---

toed in and touched things.

Half an hour later he left the house with a strange great sense of consummation. Dorothy would be pleased, he knew she would, to see again her green plaited-leather dog leash, her five-year diary, four hair ribbons in different colors, the class photograph from District School No. 5, with—would those be school-board officials? including one particularly uncompromising-looking woman member, on the front seats.

But there was no cat on the premises to be pocketed. Of that he felt fairly certain. Would a cat with the freedom of a house stay away from it for as long as the three hours the man had spent scouring the dwelling, the grounds and outbuildings? With a sense of defeat, almost of grief, he had to give up the search. All this long way for nothing.

Would the other goal of his pilgrimage prove any more achievable? There, at least, it was in a case of a moving target. He fixed the kitchen window more secretly than he had found it and slung the suitcase over his shoulder by means of a bit of cord found in the barn. Then he was off.

"A white cat? You mean Eureka?" said a boy he met on the road. "Naw, I guess she was murdered with all the rest."

"Murdered?!" gasped the Shabby Man, startled once out of his customary phlegm. "What are you talking about, boy?"

"Well, it stands to reason, don't it?" The barefoot boy kicked at a stone in the road. "The whole dern family disappeared, didn't they? The folks around here figure some ol' tramp come by and—" He looked up in sudden brainless fright. "Say, you're an old tramp!" His mouth hung open for a moment and then he was over the rail fence and half way across the alfalfa field before Shag got said:

"If they're murdered, where are the bodies?"

After that he walked a little faster. Maybe even a love magnet was not proof against the ferocity of a mob if word was going around that a tramp was the cause of the vacating at the Mankato-Gale farm.

By that evening the Shabby Man's plodding steps, not light-

ened by the suitcase, had brought him to the town of Butterfield. Don't look for it on your maps. It isn't there (except in the real world of books, where it is there immortally). It is going to be there though. It only takes a hundred years or so for some smart exploiter to put two and two together and get the next-founded new village in northeast Kansas named "Butterfield" by the local elders. After that the Oz dollars will flow in. If Christmas, Florida, and Santa Claus, Indiana, can achieve prosperity on the strength of their postmarks, why not the "home town" of the famous Dorothy of Oz?

By this time poor Shag's spiritual state wasn't so good. In the first place, he was reminded afresh of why he had not carried even a bandanna on a stick in former times. It was badly "wing-weighting" to have to haul even a half-loaded suitcase. For the first time ever he was conscious of a wish to quit hitting the road and take a rest. But suppose he tried resting? Even before making such a move he knew he didn't want to lie down in a hayloft or under somebody's back porch only to waken and find the valise with its precious freight stolen while he slept.

He was not merry and bright as he trudged along the wooden sidewalks of the business section of the little town. Not a light anywhere. Not that he would have been able to enter any shop and buy a good or service anyway. It would just have been a little comforting if there had been a lamp alight and people.

But—there *was* a light. One little lit doorway in the range of darkened store-fronts. Someone must have just opened the door in an otherwise window-shaded establishment. Yes; somebody had appeared in the lighted aperture, a man with a paper in his hand. He seemed to be looking for something.

As the Shabby Man drew near a voice called, "You, fella? Run an errand? There's a quarter in it for you."

The Shabby Man sent a silent vote of thanks heavenward and hurried his steps. "Yes, sir! I'm your man," he made haste to assure the shirt-sleeved man in arm garters and green forehead-shade.

"Here," said the man with an air of urgency. "Bad news for

## THE CARELESS KANGAROO OF OZ

---

Mrs. Norton, I'm afraid. The wire just came in. You know the Nortons' place? They're not on the line... Here, put down that suitcase..."

Good arrangement: Shag got rid of his load and the telegraph man had security for his trust. "Stranger here, hunh? Look, it's two blocks, along here, then left straight out east, mebbe half a mile. Got that? I don't think there'll be any answer. There's no train out tonight anyway. Come straight back."

Shag carried the bad news. He was sorry about that. He turned away before the couple had torn the yellow envelope, and nobody called him back. He collected his suitcase and the twenty-five cents. It was just enough for the farthest-back, smallest room at the Depot Hotel, overlooking the freight siding. The Shabby Man in a hotel! That was the day—and a famous first. The bourgeoisisation of the Shaggy Man, begun in the Emerald City of Oz, was proceeding apace in Butterfield, Kansas.

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

"Professor!!"

"Madam Mar—is it not?"

Nobody could believe anybody's eyes. "You here?! in this deep and vast waste! How incredible. It was only days ago we met and dined together and talked of young Polychrome (who was most old) and of so many mysteries of time and age."

"Yes, exactly! That Polychrome girl! It's her fault I'm here—"

"Not to mention mysteries of the mind! What's happened, Professor? Where are we and why is everything invisible around us?"

"Well, my dear, I can reassure you on that score. It's our rulers, you see, Queen Ozma and Sorceress Glinda, who for a whim made Oz invisible—"

"Oz?! But it's here that's invisible!" interrupted the captious kangaroo. "I'm sure I left Oz, and I only noticed *afterwards* not being able to see... And yet—I can see you! How come?"

"Allow me to explain." The professor recounted such details of the legislation and mechanics of the invisibilization as Princess Ozma had herself confided to him. "During the last few days I've had opportunity—alas!—to contemplate the situation in depth. You've noticed birds flying over?" he asked.

"Why, yes," agreed Mar. "Quite a few. That too I didn't understand."

"Nor I at first. But what I think has happened is this: the good wonder-workers, directed, I understand, more especially by the Witch of the South, put all Oz under an intervist—"

"Which is...?" queried the kangaroo, whose Latin was even loser than Shakespeare's.

"Sorry! 'An authoritative prohibition debarring a person or place from sight.' They're quite common, really, but not in Oz—'til now. What must have happened and what neither Ozma, when she sanctioned it, nor Glinda when she promulgated it, suspected is that such an intervist is reciprocal. If they can't see us, we can't see them. It's as simple as that."

"And what would be the corollaries of that, professor?" said

## THE CARELESS KANGAROO OF OZ

---

Mar, leaning back on her tail and getting comfortable (aside from feeling terribly dusty and a bit hungry).

The wogglebug crawled under an invisible sage bush and replied. Though the sun was invisible it obviously shone and its warmth could be felt... and felt less! in the white shade of a non-visible shrub.

"There are no physical barriers between our country and the rest of the world. In the unlikely event that they should traverse the great deserts without being able to see their goal ahead, creatures may still enter Oz. Once inside they would of course be invisible to Ozites. We in turn may leave Oz and continue to see ourselves, but nothing else."

"But those birds?!"

"Obviously Oz birds who have lost their way and are flying about in the same invisibility experienced by us."

"Dearie me, what a situation." The kindly kangaroo sighed, though comforted just the same to be now two in their predicament. "And what can we do?"

"Nothing, I should think." The wogglebug permitted himself as well an unscientific sigh. "Being Ozlings, we cannot starve to death, so I suppose we shall wander throughout eternity—or until one of the sorceresses catches on and sends us rescue."

As it happens, they did wander together for many further weeks. In the long periods of blankness the two had time to plumb to the depths the implications of what they, at least, regarded as a curse.

"*Will* the sorceresses catch on and send rescue?" reverted Mar one night. Night, alternated by day, did occur in those realms of invisibility but brought with it no increase of unseeingness. The invisibility was then merely black instead of white. Of course the pair did find it harder to see *each other* by night, and now, being once come together, they tended to stay put while it was dark. It would be too terrible now to lose one's companion.

"They must have twigged long since," stated Wogglebug, busy at a saguaro cactus he had managed to tap for water. The wanderers also tended to do their browsing by night, locating themselves by last light at some desert plantation they had felt their way to.



"People—I mean some humans—must by now have strayed over the border. Their absence will have been noted and reported. Maybe even ours have," he finished in an access of ironical humility.

"Then all Queen Ozma has to do is look at her Magic Picture and—" Mar broke off.

"Exactly: and see nothing. Or rather: she may see us, but be unable to see where we are. That's no good. I shouldn't think the greatest magic in the world could serve to pinpoint where objects were to be found in hundreds of thousands of miles of undifferentiated invisibility."

"Our Quadling ruler, Glinda, has a great book of records that lists everything happening in the world. She would surely know at once when we and others strayed across the frontiers."

"Quite possibly. But that wouldn't be any guide to finding us. as it happens, I've thought of that book myself sometimes in these days—and wondered. One knows nothing, of course, of the magical mechanics of the volume, but would it be capable of recording events, the existence of which there were no means of ascertaining by sight? If that were the case, the poor thing would have had to be busy all these centuries taking down everybody's dreams and memories: things that 'happen' but that are merely unseeable by an outside (and recording) witness. The mind boggles. Glinda's book would have to be as big as her whole palace to get it all down."

"You say that Glinda, apparently alone, brought on this powerful enchantment. In that case it's going to have to be her who cancels it..?"

"Yes, and in time I feel sure she will. But incidentally what a loss of face! She and Ozma are clearly not going to rush into any such reversal of their established policy. Probably one day they'll just dispel the charm without any fanfare, indeed without any public announcement at all. Meanwhile we needn't flatter ourselves we are so important that they'll do it untimely just for our little sakes."

With that chastening thought they both fell silent.

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

The cat was in the doghouse.

For the first time in her sojourn at the home of Retired Landowner Gulch the sun did not seem to rise and set for Eureka's benefit. She even began to think despairingly of moving on again, but when she did that the awful memories of damp and hunger and infelicitous treatment came back and she quailed. It was after all too durned comfortable where she was. As for her dream of getting to Oz: what a laugh! The wretched Dorothy had obviously forgotten all about her. Otherwise she would have looked at the Magic Picture long since and got Ozma to send for her.

No, there was nothing for it but to reingratiate herself with the Gulch woman.

To that end Eureka descended from the cozy attic rag heap to the kitchen. Nobody there. She leapt to the window-sill and looked into the garden. No one. She ended by doing a complete inspection tour of the house and grounds. She paused for fully five seconds on the cliff edge to survey the grey moving waters of the mighty Missouri: the maximum amount of time a cat will spend studying anything that is not alive or manipulated by herself.

Where *was* the old bat? Eureka knew... Whenever Miss Gulch was oddly unavailable she was in that mysterious room hitherto uninvestigated by the cat herself but designated by Miss Gulch "the still-room" (an echo perhaps from her former grander ambience?).

Eureka went and stood outside the door and meowed piercingly. It was boring but if she did it long enough she knew it would have the desired effect. Miss Gulch detested a cat's meow. On the other hand she clearly, Eureka had noted, doted on a cat's purring. Well, time enough for that when the caterwauling had done its work.

Twenty-five minutes by the kitchen clock and then the door flew open. "Wretched beast! Will you drive me to distraction with that miserable yowling?!" Eureka heard not a word but, poised for the spring, dashed between the woman's legs, was across the

cubby-hole room in one bound, clawed her way up the carved front of a tall black highboy, and crouched in the farthest ceiling corner among the cobwebs. Let Almira try to get her down from there! other than by fair words and promises.

Unexpectedly the old woman gave a rough laugh and said, "Never mind. You'd have to be let in some time if you're going to be a witch's demon." Humming the tune of the Lord's Prayer backwards she returned to the cabal she was laying with some very peculiar cards on the plank top of a sturdy table. Quickly every hair on Eureka's body rose.

'Witch's Demon'? Now almost as devoutly as she had longed to get into the room the cat yearned to get out.

Everything fell into place. The unexpected welcome at the start. The amiable manner that consorted so ill with the forbidding appearance. The best of everything for the new-accepted pet. The odd turns of phrase. Most of all, those strange physical residues from midnight rites. It had been on Eureka's tongue to say "witch" a dozen times. She just hadn't wanted to think anything so awful had happened to her. She was to be trained up to ride shotgun on a broomstick!

She! Eureka—who had been to Fairyland and petted by princesses—to come to this. Could she endure a life of crime?

Maybe she could.

After all, that soi-disant princess, Dorothy, didn't ogre a thing about her. Had waltzed off to Oz twice without a wave goodbye. Had not had the common curiosity to look in a magic view-finder a see what her pet was doing and send for her. Or *had* looked—and didn't send. It must be one or other. Either way, she, Eureka, was unloved. And she was too good not to be appreciated.

To hell with Oz. Here was an old hag who wanted nothing better than to strew roses before her. *Why not* cast her lot in with her? Anyway, what Almira Gulch was going didn't look that criminal. Eureka crept to the edge of the wardrobe and peered down.

Laying out cards with pictures of swords and forked clubs and hanged men, while mumbling words Eureka had never heard on or inside the earth. Nothing otherwise seemed to be happen-

## THE CARELESS KANGAROO OF OZ

---

ing. No devils appearing out of pepperpots or genii rising from Coca-Cola bottles. Maybe she, Eureka, as 'demon', was being waited on to make a magical entrance from somewhere.

Okay. She would. She raised herself on her haunches and prepared to make her "feather flight." Eureka had a little magic too, if only cat magic. Sheathing and unsheathing her claws, for instance, and knowing perfectly when each stance was appropriate; that was a magic that humans, at least, could never account for. Now she launched herself and glided gracefully down to land pancake-light on the woman's shoulder.

Almira let out a squawk but kidded nobody. The cat's arrival was neither startling nor offensive to her. When Eureka began to purr deafeningly the beldam shushed her delightedly. "If you'd be still a minute you'd hear what the future's got in store... See there? The sprouting staff. That means that something is going to start over. What could it be? Our friendship perhaps?" Eureka gave a sudden burst of purr, then broke off. "That's right." Miss Gulch disengaged a hand to pull one of Eureka's forepaws briefly. "But the falling cliff! Whatever could that signify? I know the manual says it means an unexpected journey. But suppose it were literal!? and the bluffs out here are scheduled for collapse. Horrors. What do you suppose we ought to do? Anyway, I'll keep the broom by me for instant flight, just in case we get a moment's warning... Oh, but this is too tiresome. Look: the dangling man. No, of course it doesn't mean someone we know is going to be hanged. But it does mean that something unpleasant is going to happen, and in connection with a man. There'll never have been a train wreck! and anything happened to Ted?! I would be very sorry indeed." The woman muttered on and Eureka pretended to take an interest. The pleasant minutes ticked away.

And then—oh, nuts!—she heard the doorbell ring.

It was Graduation Day in the forest. All thirty-two of the fairy band were in attendance; Lurline (naturally) officiating. Even some ryls and knooks from outlying fields and streams had been invited, to swell the crowd and make Miss Polychrome feel like she was a pretty important fairy, having passed her finals with flying draperies and been granted her M.A. (Magic Arts) degree, which, in her case, as a rainbow maiden, was sunny-cum-cloudy.

Poly was dressed as usual all in rainbow colors but instead of the customary skull-cap wore a mortar-board. She was standing at the edge of the glade and from there she stepped out and paced measuredly along the way cleared among the admiring on-lookers at each side until she came to a halt before the queen fairy's toadstool throne. There she knelt humbly and waited for the mantle of dignity to descend about her shoulders.

This it did only figuratively. Queen Lurline stepped down and came to her, raising her up and placing a butterfly kiss on each cheek.

"Well done, young woman," she said and gave her a scroll case. She didn't give her a scroll because Polychrome had no wall to hang a diploma on but a scroll *case* was very useful for carrying the magic wand the rain fairy was now accorded. There were, in fact, one or two documents of gossamer stating that the graduate was authorized to practise all forms of magic (fairy *and* witchcraft) by land, sea, or air, and serving as passports to wherever she chose to go. The act of commencement was accomplished when Lurline hung this case with its rolled-up contents and dangling seals of Excellence, Merit, and Not Bad over Polychrome's shoulder by a silver cord. "Go forth," quoth the Queen, "and do good wherever you may."

A few dainty tears of movedness were shed on either side. Then, in gayer mood and as opposed to the alumna's official academic awards, Lurline gave her a graduation present. "All the girls chipped in to get this for you," she confided. "You see?: it's a two-way wrist wireless, Mr. Marconi's latest refinement. It isn't even

## THE CARELESS KANGAROO OF OZ

---

generally available out in the great world yet. If either you or I should ever find it necessary to send an urgent message, all you do is press this tiny button. The other will hear a beeping sound and then both will be able to speak to each other."

"Oh, how grand!" cried the Rainbow's daughter. "I'll call you all the time to let you know how. I'm getting on!"

Lurline, with a droll look, could do no less than agree that that would be charming.

Now nothing remained but for Polychrome to go round the circle of her fairy cousins and take fond leave. She even patted a few knooks on the head. They all trailed after her as she danced along the forest path leading to the great open plain where she would wait for rain.

That proved not to be quite as tedious an interim as it might sound, since Lurline had been able to send word some days earlier that at last the errant rainbow girl was willing and able to return home. The fairy band got out their crocheting and sat down to wait. When they ran out of materials they had only to pluck threads of thistledown from the wandering air.

Soon a cloud no bigger than a manikin's hand appeared over the far horizon. Or no, make that two clouds, one traveling much faster than the other. The one, blown by the hurrying wind, approached rather fast, and on a somewhat eccentric course. It seemed to be hunting for a mountain peak on which to tear itself open, but on the flat plain between Burzee and the desert there weren't any such. The crowd of fairies watched as it passed on over head in the direction of Trom—and then, curiously, it doubled back!

Now it began to move in an even more erratic wag, seeming to lurch up and down. One might have assessed that it was trying to employ centrifugality to part itself, much as a doorknob in a paper bag will fly out the bottom if you shake it enough.

Meanwhile the second cloud was coming on in a leisurely fashion, *slower* than the velocity of the wind. It was apparently not trying for any effect at all but drifted slowly on in one direction. It was an odd cloud. It looked like a big puffy doughnut standing

on end and with something indistinct in the middle of it, like a wiener thrust through a bagel.

The fairies now scarcely knew which way to look at this two-ring circus in the sky. But quickly the decision was made for them when the eccentrically moving cloud located itself directly over them, made a supreme effort—and let loose a deluge. The fay folk all rushed for cover under leaves, all except Polychrome, who stood joying in falling rain for the first time in many months..

The worst of the cloudburst passed over and the the sun flared out again, beaming down through thousands of raindrops, and there you were!: as radiant a rainbow as you'd want to see arc'ed down. But it was a strictly temporary utilitarian affair. Without time-consuming backward glances Poly ran to the foot of it and began to mount her father's leg.

Up, up she crawled, then scrambled, then danced seeming to merge in her varicolored draperies into the rainbow bands of every hue. The watchers below could only just make out her black mortarboard near the highest level of the bow when—heavens! the weird doughnut-shaped cloud crashed into the rainbow and blotted out everything. The shadow of the drifting cloud-island obscured that part of the bow below it, and as for the section above: as if overwhelmed by the collision it immediately began to fade and in a moment not a wrack of it remained behind.

And what of Polychrome?

It would appear that she had been shanghaied by the interloping cloud and was now drifting irretrievably away to the northeast as an inadvertent passenger on Sky Island.

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

Mr. Cantion fell under the spell of the Love Magnet like all the rest. He thought the shabby man was the nicest old man! and wanted to put little jobs in his way to help him on. So it was that when Shag strolled past the telegraph office, not quite fortuitously, the next day, Mr. Cantion in the doorway said genially, "Got time for another delivery?" and the Shabby Man was in business.

The first thing he did was stay not so shabby. He went to the dry-cleaning shop and had his Alpinish suit steamed and pressed. Possessing no other outfit, he stood in a closet while the work proceeded. Then he went to a barber shop and had himself slick-shaven except for his distinguished Van Dyke. When he returned to the telegraph office as the Snazzy Man, the telegraphist hesitated to employ him as an errand boy anymore and began to teach him the intricacies of wireful communication. That night in the hotel the Coloradan memorized the Morse code and he was in (another) business.

He had been in town a week before he got up his courage to go to call on the Carmichaels. By now he could afford the grandest bouquet at Bandler's Blossoms. He timed his visit well and succeeded in arriving on the front porch of the jeweler's house at a time when Earl Carmichael was safely away at the store.

Molly the maid came to the screen door. "The missus? I'll see if she's in." Of course she was. Visitors were so few and door-to-door salesmen so inoffensive in 1910 that there was no reason for her not to be at home.

Penelope appeared at the door, then opened the screen for a clearer look, and finally pronounced the Snazzy Man's name. I don't know what it was; do you?

"Penelope."

"I hardly knew you," she said.

"It'll be the beard," answered the caller, for lack of anything else to say, right at first, that would make any sense.

Penelope Thacker Carmichael's eye fell on the Magnet at once. She exhaled a little sigh. "So it was you?" she said quietly. "I



thought it must have been."

The man's hand was at his lapel unhooking the talisman. "I came to bring it back."

"Let us talk about it," said the woman and pushed the screen door wider. Silently the two walked inside. Silently the man handed over the bouquet and the brooch. Mrs. Carmichael took one but not the other. "I'll get a vase," said she.

When the yellow blossoms glowed like a small sun in a green glass bowl before the lace curtains the visitor said, "But not the magnet?"

"Time has brought me a little—what would you call it?: 'insight'? Things should stay with those who need them—or love them."

"Yes, I needed it. But you loved it."

"Did I? Yes, perhaps I did. But I would never have—taken it in order to possess it. You did—and so I suppose your need was greater."

"You call that insight? What about all the thieves and robbers in the world who are driven by every ignoble motive to 'take' things? Does that mean that their 'need' is so great? and we are all to lie down quietly and let them do it?"

"I would have to. I couldn't dirty my hands by scrabbling to get back things that had been taken from me."

"Even when something is offered back?"

"That makes good the past, and I thank you. But what about the future? I treasured the magnet, not for its strange power but for my father's blood, but now I know that seeing the magnet daily also made me think of him daily and of his pitiful and inexplicable end. Not having the talisman, I have not done so—quite so often—and that made me... lees unhappy. So you see: it's quite a selfish motive of mine; I don't want to see, and be saddened, every day."

The Snazzy Man pinned the ornament back in its accustomed place and looked again at her who had been Penelope Thacker and his great love. She was a great lady now, he realized that clearly. He also admired her charm and mature grace, her dignity

## THE CARELESS KANGAROO OF OZ

---

and beauty. But he didn't love her any more... not since she had incautiously laid down the Love Magnet and it had become his.

But still he could learn from her, even at his age and at hers—though he wondered if he could ever be so selfless, relinquishing possessions for noble reasons. He had only just begun to care about possessions! Yet he could see that her attitude was the right one. True contentment could never come as a product of mere ownership. You could be happy creating things but never in just possessing them. (And the Shaggy Man had never created anything.)

“—and loving things.” Did she say that? He had been wool-gathering, having ideas he had never had before, in too many wandering years.

“Yes: I said happiness comes from making things and from loving things. I suppose the measure of love is how much you mind when you lose a thing, a person. It happens to me all the time.”

“All the time?” said the man. “Has somebody besides me been low enough to steal from you?”

“Not stealing so much. But things can still get away. People die. People go away. Ambitions don't materialize. Hopes are disappointed. Fondness isn't returned.”

“You've had all that?” wondered her visitor. “It's hard to believe. You seem so—untouched.” The Snazzy Man was having to grope for words in a conversation of a solemnity unfamiliar to him.

“Oh, I'm undemonstrative.” Mrs. Carmichael gave a little mocking laugh. “I don't have crying jags. I never yell. But inside...

“Never mind! I'm sure you could enjoy a glass of lemonade. I won't suggest anything stronger—though I know where my husband keeps his supply from over the state line.”

The descent from the lofty in the woman's tone was almost shocking. She too had felt its strangeness for him and was trying to turn the tenor of the talk. Shag could see that and wondered again at her considerateness.

While she was out of the room the Man looked around. The

room was pleasant in its muted soft grey sort of way. It was evident that the children's voices he could hear somewhere were seldom raised in this room. It was kept for formal or solemn occasions, as now. But not too solemn! Penelope's last words had seemed to want to imply...

The antimacassars were spotless. The aspidistra was thriving. Nothing looked very interesting, except possibly that spotted china dog on the whatnot against the opposite wall. Restless, Shag rose to go look at it.

"You like Toby?" said Mrs. Carmichael, returning with the tray. "So did our little friend." She put down the salver beside the figurine. The Snazzy Man looked a question. "I said friends go away. There's an example."

She took a chair and left her guest to serve himself. "A little white cat turned up one day. We all grew fond of it. Then another day it disappeared and was never seen again. That's the way: love things and lose them."

Shag was struck. "A white cat? What was its name?"

"Who's to say? The children called it 'That Cat'."

"A stray, then? Could you describe it?"

The woman looked in query. "Why, quite an ordinary little white cat. Rather small for its apparent age, I thought. Something kittenish about it. Blue eyes—"

"Eureka!" cried the Snazzy Man.

"Have you found something?" asked Mrs. Carmichael in amused surprise.

"I hope so. I haven't mentioned it, but besides, my duty to bring back your magnet there was also a commission to retrieve a friend's mislaid pet kitten—"

"This wasn't, strictly speaking, a kitten."

"No, Dorothy's isn't either." The Snazzy Man told the tale, only leaving out all disconcerting references to magic. "And the worst of it is: I've never seen the cat, only had a description of it. I wouldn't actually recognize it if I saw it. It's like looking for a needle in a haystack."

"And Kansas is your haystacks" said Mrs. Carmichael, getting

## THE CARELESS KANGAROO OF OZ

---

interested. "I feel sure it's the very cat. Everything fits: the description, the times as you specify them, and the cat's personality. It was an independent little thing. It spent all its time in the attic, curled around this statuette."

Shag examined the ohina figurine with interest. "I wonder why," he pondered. "Eureka is known not to get along with dogs—at least, one dog."

"Who knows what goes on in the mind of a cat? She clearly loved this 'dog' so much that it surprises me she left. If not for our sakes, then for the pug's."

"You know she left'?"

"Well, she wasn't 'cat-napped', if that's what you mean," said Penelope, continuing to lighten the conversation. "I think we were a way-station. She was on her way somewhere."

"To Oz!" blurted the Snazzy Man and then blushed suddenly.

"Oz'?", said Mrs. Carmichael.

"To us', I said," lied Shag, trying to recapture lost ground. "To her friends, who miss her. To young Dorothy—and her relatives. And others who sent me to find her."

"And where are they?" pursued his hostess.

"Er—east of here," Shag blundered on awkwardly, determined not again to reveal that he was an emissary from fairyland. It didn't go with the calm grey atmosphere in this room and the antimacassars. People might laugh. He didn't want to be laughed at by Penelope.

She was miles ahead of him as usual. Instantly grasping his intention of secrecy, Mrs. Carmichael didn't let the faintest pause happen before she said enthusiastically, "East: of course! From that farm as you describe it, to Butterfield, is straight east. And she's headed on further easterly, I'll bet you!"

The boyish turn of phrase was charming in the lady. But Shag didn't want to bet. He was sure she was right. From utter hopelessness the idea of finding Dorothy's pet had again become a possibility. He brightened from the depression he had felt throughout the visit so far.

"So I have only to hike on straight east and ask at every house

I pass..."

"That's all!" laughed Penelope and sipped from her glass.

"No, it *is* hopeless," said the man and sank in gloom again.

"Don't forget I've never seen this cat. Nor she me. How can I recognize her if we *should* meet?"

"She'll recognize *you*," said the woman.

"But I've said: as far as I know Eureka's never laid eyes on me!"

"Never mind. She may not know you—but she'll recognize *that*," and Mrs. Carmichael pointed at the china dog.

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

Queen Ozma's chickens were coming home to roost.

Some roosting had been in order for quite a time now. Indeed, two days hadn't passed after Ozma and Glinda's laying of the spell of invisibility over Oz before complaints began to come in.

Nobody seemed to mind that Oz was invisible. Nobody even seemed to notice. But what they did mind very much was that all outside Oz was, in turn, invisible to them. Your Ozite in the street didn't know what caused it but on the day that the red sorceress' charm went into effect the clouds that had happened to be floating suspended over the magic land moved on in a generally eastward direction until they all disappeared and then no more took their place. Although there were no (visible) clouds the sun was obscured. When it rained, it rained (invisibly) out of a clear sky; the falling drops could not be seen. And when night came there were no moon or stars. Everything outside of Oz was invisible and everything from outside that came into, or over, Oz remained invisible.

The wonderworkers ought to have thought of that when they passed their enchantment. The world could get along without Oz but Oz could not get along without the world outside. It should have occurred to Glinda that if you implement a blanket invisibility spell, creatures outside can't see it but neither can those within see out. Invisibility of that sort is of course reciprocal. But she suffered a blind spot.

So now the chickens, many of them invisible, were coming home to roost. Letters arrived every day at the palace, fluttering like leaves in autumn. One of the first, badly spelt, was from the children of Mar, the capricious kangaroo. It said (with spelling corrected, for Ozma's eyes, by the court scribe, "Our ma. Where is she? She went away. She left nothing for dinner. We can't find the can-opener. Please send our ma. Or else a can-opener."

Then came an urgent communication on embossed lavender paper from the Secretariat of the Court of Ix. Her Serene Highness Zixi desired to ask if anything was known of the whereabouts

of the esteemed Witch of the North Tattypoo, who had been expected on a semi-state visit but had never arrived. In almost the same mail came an enormous postcard painfully scrawled by the rubber-gloved claw of Agnes the Dragon, reporting the same circumstances. And there were others, from relatives of various Oz travelers who had mysteriously disappeared.

Feathered migrants without number were constantly in touch with the Palace of Magic, reporting that kinsbirds of theirs had vanished. Ozma could never get away from her desk, what with all the people and animals she had constantly to reassure that their loved ones were not lost forever but only temporarily. She was there still when a deputation of three humans was announced, but she had not had time to receive them before Jellia Jamb ran back in to say, "There are more blackbirds on the line!"

"Yes, I can see them!" retorted the Girl Ruler almost snappishly and gestured through the adjacent window, from which there was a view of four and twenty black songsters huddling, with fluffed-out feathers against the invisible rain, on the telephone wire.

It was a full twenty minutes before she could step to the big pier-glass, settle her crown, tuck an ear-poppy (dislodged by the telephone receiver) back in place, and ring to inform Jellia that she was now receiving. The wizard Wam, Professor Nowitall, and Sub-Registrar Fex hurried in, hats in hands.

With minimal genuflecting they stated their problem. "It's all my fault, Your Grace," confessed Wam. "I told a fib." The story came out: Wam, remembering young (old) Polychrome's plea, had thought it a good jest to send Professor Wogglebug, when he came enquiring, on a wild goose chase to the north when in point of fact the rainbow maiden, as he knew, had departed for the south. When the deputation from the Royal College showed up, in their turn, asking after the Professor, the wizard, shaken out of his complacency, had joined them immediately to drive, in his patented wind-powered quattricycle, over the country line to Tattypoo's residence.

The dragon housekeeper's news was not encouraging. Realizing what must have happened, Wam abandoned, on behalf of his

## THE CARELESS KANGAROO OF OZ

---

companions, any thought of pressing on to the court of Ix and instead directed their wheels toward the Oz capital. It was obvious Wogglebug was lost on the Impassable Desert. What could those in authority do about it?

Ozma had a little orgy of contrition. "I had no idea it would work out like this! I acted only with the best of intentions. We wanted to shield Oz from further penetration from the outside world, chiefly, of course, penetration by the forces of wickedness that we learn are on the alert not only inside Oz but also across the deserts. I was not told the pall of invisibility would operate also in reverse—though of course it does seem logical. I am most upset."

The callers observed a few moments of respectful silence. But Ozma's upsetness was not going to alter cases. Presently Professor Nowitall took up the theme again: "Would it not be possible to require the powerful Sorceress of the South to reverse the charm?"

"Of course it would, Professor," said Ozma with something approaching a pout. "But at least until we can perfect some other all-embracing method of screening or, to be honest, I should say 'blocking'—newcomers to Oz, it will have to stay in effect. However! that does not absolve us of the obligation to rescue Ozites who all unwittingly may have strayed across the frontier—"

"And what, your grace, of creatures from the enchanted lands beyond the deserts?" interjected Wizard Wam. "People from Merryland and Ev and the offshore island countries have heretofore traveled to Oz freely."

"Indeed!" quoth Professor Eydoant. "I recall your majesty's birthday party only last summer and the glamor of standing on the sidelines to watch the arrival of Her Majesty of Ix and the King of Noland and the ruler of Hiland-Loland and so many more. Such an occasion can now never be repeated."

"Please, professor!" Ozma raised her hand and spoke with a suggestion of asperity. "I *know*. I've said that passing the invisibility law was stupid. What more would you have?"

The academic was quite inarticulate in his bumbling apolo-



gies. Ozma relented. "Summut we will do," she quoted, "but what?" The fairy princess was stumped.

Young Fex was just about to make bold to offer a suggestion when Jellia Jamb appeared again at the office door, while an unfamiliar babble of girlish voices was heard somewhere behind her. "Your Grace," announced the little maid, "nineteen daughters of the Rainbow crave an audience of Your Grace."

The girl ruler raised her eyebrows and lifted her shoulders fractionally in a gesture of 'what next?' and signified her assent. Fex was thrilled to bits when Aurora and all her sisters came tripping into the little room. The press was so great that the Registrar was squeezed against the bookcases by the nearness of Regenvlaag, Arcenciel, and Lucy, but he spoke no word of complaint.

"Oh, Princess Ozma," wailed Aurora and fell on her knees. "The most awful thing has happened! Our Poly's been kidnapped!!"

"Yes!" chimed in Curcubeu. "The last we saw of her she was sailing away across the desert—"

"With her head sticking out of a low-flying cloud," supplied Sateenkaari.

"It wasn't a cloud exactly," corrected Tien Kang.

"No, more like an island," agreed Naiad, "but sort of carried along by a cloud."

"The cloud was shaped like a doughnut," put in Prism, as if that were important.

"Yes," marveled Alouette: "dense! Almost solid-looking like an inflated inner-tube—"

"But a different color," reminded Raduga.

"Color'?" echoed Iris. "You mean 'colors'. It was sort of pink on one aide and blue on the other—with a lavender bit in between."

"Not at all your normal cloud colors," offered Opal. "And the funny part was: that other strange islandy piece was the *same* colors as the doughnutty part."

"Dad knew right away what it was," recalled Regenvlaag from

near Fex's left cheek.

"What?" asked Arcenciel from the other cheek.

"Didn't you hear? It's called 'Sky Island'," put in Pluvia.

"He says he's noticed it floating along in the sky lots of time," said Aquarelle.

"I never did," complained Arcobaleno—but then, she missed a lot.

"I wonder what makes it go," mused Vattenande.

"Pneumaticity and convection currents, naturally," informed Lucy, turning for a moment from Fex's chin.

"I do hope Poly will be happy there," murmured Farvespill.

"But she mustn't *stay* there! We've got to get her back!" summed up Roong.

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

"Awk!!" squawked the white cat and leapt off her mistress' shoulder to land not at all lightly on the entry-way mat and skitter under a bed two rooms away. "That awful old tramp!! What in the world is he doing here?!"

Eureka's memory was good and she had no trouble at all in recognizing a man she had observed for ten minutes only from the ridgepole of Uncle Henry's farmhouse the previous summer. She had (alas) had the memory drummed into her later that month when Dorothy was back from Oz and bragging about the adventures she had had in the company of the disreputable bearded wanderer.

But the man was changed! The clothes were shabbyish and the face whiskery enough to recognize, but even so! he certainly had come up in the world since he had appeared at the Mankato-Gale fence and begun chatting up her little (former) mistress. That hiking costume he wore was nothing like the tattered business suit of his first appearance. But though the face hair was much reduced Eureka would recognize anywhere the broad flattened nose and the bushy eyebrows. How in heaven's name had the creature ever found his way here?

Curiosity was killing the cat. No matter how great her aversion to the wretched individual she *had* to know what was going on. Stealthily she crept from her place and insinuated herself along the skirting-boards until she could hear what was being said around the open door to the kitchen.

"—believe my ears," the interloper's voice was saying, "when the kind lady said I could take it with me!

"'But this is too much,' I protested. 'That's quite a valuable piece.'

"'Oh, not really,' she went on. 'See, there's a chip off it. And it's been out of sight for years. My best-belov'd too thinks it is hideous' though I'm not quite sure what she was quoting. 'And maybe it will help you to find her.'

"I certainly couldn't refuse—and didn't want to! After the

## THE CARELESS KANGAROO OF OZ

---

fantastic coincidence of coming to the very house where the animal I sought had taken shelter, it would be mocking fate to ignore this opportunity of carrying the search on to a successful conclusion if I could. All I had to do, we figured, was make my way on eastward, asking at every house that could possibly harbor a cat—”

“‘CAT’?” thought Eureka with a splutter of exclamation marks. ‘Is he talking about *me*?!!’ All she had heard so far seemed hauntingly familiar and the word “cat” left no doubt in her mind. But she was missing vital information.

“I resigned my little job as telegrapher and hit the road. I’ve been asking every person encountered for the last two weeks if they’ve seen a stray white cat—”

“And I had!” declared Miss Gulch in no uncertain terms. “So have you, by now. What do you think?”

“I don’t know, ma’am. I only got a glimpse. And as you know I’ve never seen Eureka—”

The eavesdropping cat nearly split. And indeed, she didn’t know whether to split or go blind. How thrilling: to have two adult humans disquisitioning about her fate. There was attention for you—and she adored it. But let her not be hasty: how could she best turn this situation to her advantage? and what did it all mean?

Certain facts were clear. The tramp she herself knew to be the one Dorothy had decamped to Oz with was back in Kansas and asking after herself. That could only mean the feckless Dorothy had sent him to find her, and *that* meant that she still cared.

Though she had stupidly left her pet behind she now wanted to make all right again. Was Eureka going to hold a grudge?

Well, no, she didn’t think she was. But what of Almira? The cat had just about decided to throw in her lot with her and become a witch’s familiar. Could she now just leave in the lurch the individual who had paid her most honor since her unceremonious abandonment by everyone else all those week ago? It would be hard. But Eureka thought of a way out. Let the woman herself decide! If she put up a scrap for her, why then, Eureka was con-

tent to stay. And if she didn't, it was nice to know some body was waiting for her in Oz (even if there, admittedly, they did not show her so much honor).

The cat gave a hasty lick to shoulder fur, silenced any form of verbalizing (no one was to know from anything *she* said whether she was pleased or vexed), and with tail erect stalked into the kitchen looking neither to right nor left. "Pretty puss!" said the woman.

"Eureka!...?" said the man The cat said nothing.

She did happen to glance up, however. What she caught sight of there made her instantly forget her objectives. Oh heaven! her darling friend of the Butterfield attic! And was it not winking its goggle eyes solemnly down at her? And was its pink bow not the prettiest thing she had ever seen? Eureka took one violent spring and was on the table-top next to her idol. She knew then that whatever should be its fate must be hers, too.

Polychrome was all a-tumble. Her mortarboard had fallen off and her draperies were tangled and blown in every direction in a way she had never achieved in even the wildest of her dancing dithyrambs. Luckily she had had forethought enough to hook her "diploma-case" around her neck and under her arm before boarding the rainbow, so that was spared to her now when all else was topsy-turvy and helter-skelter.

Now, incredible as it may seem, the rainbow's daughter had never been in a cloud before. The rainbow by definition is always in sunshine, though of course very close to where water vapor hangs in folds and gathers. In the mist she couldn't seem to find a foothold. She just kept plunging and lurching about, unable to see a thing but the lavender and blue and pink fog all about her.

Still, that couldn't go on forever. Polychrome never wore a watch, of course, and she was much too upset to think of counting by seconds, but still she had the impression that about an hour's worth of this pointless head-over-heeling had gone on when suddenly she fetched up against a smooth hard surface. Visibility inside the cloud was poor but she thought the surface was an undistinguished grey. Nor could she stand up on it. The direction of the pull of gravity seemed to indicate that the surface was a perpendicular wall.

It gave the girl something to do, however, to feel around on the surface, to let the swirling of the cloud vapor bear her this way and that, and so doing she came presently to an unevenness which proved in fact to be a window-sill. She gripped it in failing fingers and looked through the window.

Without its being dark beyond the pane she yet couldn't really make out anything. It was almost if the opposite surface of the glass were painted the same color as the wall in which it stood. What if it was merely a false window! Oh, she couldn't bear that disappointment. She continued to stare distractedly into the glass (if glass it was).

Suddenly the window flew open, pushing her, as it angled

outward, back into the mist again, and a round moony voice cried, "My dear young lady! What in the moon are you doing there?!"

Poly was no more disconcerted than that she could keep her wit about her as she paddled dog-stroke fashion back through the fog and said, "Nothing in the moon. But in this cloud I'm trying to tell heads from tails. Where *am* I?!"

"Why, this is the control room of Sky Island." As she swam nearer Polychrome could see that a pale moon-face was speaking. "I'm the engineer. And who might you be?"

After having been invited to swim through the window opening and get her feet on what seemed solid ground again, Poly presented her credentials. To her surprise, once the window was shut the room seemed quite adequately lighted from some indeterminable source. She looked around her and was very much impressed. It was like being on the bridge of a ship (not that the rainbow's daughter ever had been aboard any vessel more complicated than a sand-boat). On each wall were instrument panels and information consoles and, aimed in the four directions, there were long spy-tubes: actually, periscopes, but Polychrome wasn't to know that.

The moon-face of her interlocutor was placed above a lanky nondescript body. At the ends of the angular arms were very capable-looking hands. One of these was holding the girl graduate's gossamer paper testimonials and the moony voice said, "Mmm, very nice. It's agreeable to meet a fellow initiate into arcane lore."

"Yes, and I know a lot about unusual subjects too," assured the fairy. It was almost as if she were standing for a job interview.

The engineer looked at her quizzically. "You've been very forthcoming about your origins," he said. "I can be no less. I am Ezra P. Tinker, late a resident of the moon<sup>§</sup>, now pinch-hitting as driver of this aerial island. How may I serve you?"

Poly simpered agreeably and said, "Well, perhaps first it might be nice to have a sip of something or other. My struggles in the

---

§ See *The Man in the Moon in Oz*. Editor's note.

## THE CARELESS KANGAROO OF OZ

---

cloud seem to have worn me out rather. If you happen to have any dew drops..."

"Well, no," regretted the man, "but I keep a few moon-cakes in this cupboard—" and he stooped to a little door close by.

The rainbow's daughter took a fragment of a crumb and found it to her liking. She nibbled down into the bland sweet clayey substance of a cake and seemed to enjoy it, until she was brought up short by the surprising presence of a hard-boiled egg. She pushed the plate genteelly a little aside.

The engineer was back at his spy tube and button panel. "And now?" he said, when he noticed his guest had completed her collation.

"All I really want is to get on home to the rainbow," confessed the maiden. "But I must admit I'm most intrigued by everything here. You mean this place is that doughnut-wrapped affair that sometimes on the rainbow we've seen floating by at a distance?"

"That would seem to be us all right," agreed the moon man cheerfully.

"How frightfully interesting," murmured the girl. "I'm full of the questions that must naturally occur to any newcomer here, like: How did such an aerial island get started? and why? And who lives here? And how do you decide which direction to fly in? And how do you propel it along?"

"Oh, dear me," laughed the engineer, "those are questions indeed! I'm afraid I can't answer the historical one. I'm really a stranger here myself. But I do know that Sky Island is a fairy country, so I suppose it must have been created at one time by the fairies. Why, or for what, is all unknown to me," he quoted. In his spare time he read the classics.

"—but the mechanical" he went on. "I can enlighten you there. Every day a message is sent down by the Pinks, telling me which direction to steer in.

"The Pinks?" queried Poly.

"Yes. You've noticed pinkish glints in the cloud? (as well as blue). The floating island is divided into two countries, a pink and a blue. The Pink people seem an intelligent race and take an



interest in the management of the island. The Blues are a surlier tribe but luckily are also far less alert mentally. Apparently they have never realized that the island is in fact dirigible, so at least we don't get any conflicting signals from them, for, alas, the Pinks and the Blues are great rivals, even enemies."

Poly looked solemn. "And what makes it go?"

"Oh, the island's air-borne all right. This huge band of cloud (known as the Magicianio Cloud) is magically constituted and acts as a vast doughnut-shaped balloon, carrying the whole thing along."

"How awful," shuddered the sunshine girl, "—I mean, to live in this fog all the time."

"That's why I have the windows taffeta-painted," explained Mr. Tinker. "See: according to which angle you look at them from you see a different and pretty, *sunny* scene. It's only when you look straight into the glass at right angles that you see what's actually outside. Usually that is only unvarying fog but today I was delighted to see *you* there."

Polychrome danced around the good-sized room, enchanted to discover that what she had thought was a colorful but static mural in fact shifted every instant as you moved past it, to reveal a thousand facets of different and charming landscapes. But always the narrow band *exactly* opposite your eyes showed the gloomy fog. She stopped. "But what about the poor Pinks and Blues?... Or do they live behind taffeta windows too?"

"Oh, dear, no. They live at either end of the island and those ends aren't cloud-covered at all. The cloud only envelopes about a third of the whole territory, right across the middle. Of course there are creatures living there too but they're such as love the damp and they don't seem to mind the fog."

The rainbow maiden sighed. "It's all been most fascinating, Mr. Tinker. But I suppose I had better be off and find the leader of these Pinks."

The engineer turned from his steersman's calculations and quizzed her. "Why do you want to see the Pinks?"

Polychrome stared. "Why, to get them to authorize you to steer

us toward the rainbow again, so I can go back home."

"Hmm." Tinker turned back to his wheel. "I suppose you would want to go, wouldn't you?... For just a bit I was thinking how nice it would be if you just stayed here."

"Oh, Mr. Tinker..." By now Polychrome was getting used to human creatures falling under her spell. But she mustn't forget her heart was already given. Slowly but surely she thought she was getting nearer to the heart that held hers and she mustn't delay her progress now.

Wistfully the moon man showed her the door that opened on a spiral stairway climbing up and up through the substance of Sky Island. "At the top it's to the right," he said, and then he kissed her hand in farewell.

## c h a p t e r                    t h i r t y - o n e

Princess Ozma had at last to go into conference with her mentor, the Sorceress Glinda. For moral support she took along her house magician, the wizard Oz, who was on his way to becoming quite a clever magic-worker himself, though of course he knew nothing about *fairy* magic. The day was never coming when the Wizard would turn into a fairy!

They traveled by Sawhorse-drawn red wagon and were at the Pink Palace in time for late lunch. "The rainbow maidens were quite overwrought," said Ozma over the broccoli soup. "I quieted their fears as best I could, but I really didn't know what to suggest. The problems are beginning to pile up. It was bad enough with the complications caused by the new pall of invisibility—"

"Yes," put in Glinda, "I'm afraid we were a bit premature with that. You and I actually never even conferred about the measure before I just up and did it. But I must tell you, my dear, I was so sickened and disgusted by the idea of so much nastiness invading Oz—"

"You refer, of course, to those Whimsies and Phanfasms and things, your grace?" inserted the Wizard, just for the record.

"That's right. We have some pretty peculiar peoples living in Oz itself," said the sorceress, "but they're small potatoes: pesky but not really dangerous. But those Erbs are genuinely evil. It was unthinkable that they be allowed to circulate freely in Oz—and I'm afraid I *didn't* think, I just concentrated my powers and brought down on Oz the heaviest spell I was capable of—"

"Entirely understandable," broke in Ozma fervently. "Just what I would have done myself. You have nothing to reproach yourself for, my dear. Only now we must undo the enchantment—"

"We can't."

"What?"

"I'm more sorry than I can say. The spell was a Three-Year Spell."

"Oh, dear," gasped Ozma, who knew what that implied.

## THE CARELESS KANGAROO OF OZ

---

“Exactly. With such powerful formulas as I invoked, the magic *cannot* be undone. All the magic in fairyland would blow its fuses if any such thing were attempted. There is only one consolation. At the end of the three years—actually a thousand days, to be quite exact the spell self-destructs. More than being simply revocable, it passes away of itself. After that it must be *reinvoked*, if need be.”

“Oh, Faerie forbid,” cried Ozma. “These sideeffects are much too troublesome to be coped with! We must simply employ the thousand days to think of some *other* way to keep undesirable elements out of Oz.<sup>§</sup> But for now: what are we to do? Ozites are disappearing over the border and never being seen again. Their friends are starting to panic. We can’t Just leave them out there...”

“And there’s no way to locate them,” added the Wizard, “even if we could employ some form of long-range retrieval.”

“There’s only one ray of hope,” said the red witch thoughtfully. “Oh, pardon me a moment—” The fairy-phone was ringing. She opened the window at her elbow.

The fairy-phone service operates for all fairies by means of any bell-shaped flower. The blossom is both speaking-tube and receiver. You “dial” by speaking into it and are at once connected with the bellflower nearest your desired interlocutor. Others can by invitation be initiated into the secret of receiving fairy phone calls but only a fairy can *place* a call. The witch Glinda was such an initiate and all the morning glories and columbines and nasturtiums that twined around her palace walls were hooked up to the system.

“Lurline!” the sorceress was heard to exclaim. She gestured imperatively for the others to carry on eating. “What a marvelous coincidence! We would probably have been trying to contact you ourselves in about ten minutes. Who? Yes, she’s right here, You’ve been trying to get through to her?... Well, if we need to phone back I’ll get her on the line: as a fairy— Yes, we’ve heard about what happened to Poly. That’s one of the things we’re in con-

---

§ For how other means were tried—and failed—see *The Ten Woodmen of Oz*.

ference about.. Yes, Ozma told me. Sky Island. Well, how splendid! Now surely she'll have presence of mind to communicate with you... No! I hadn't thought of that. But obviously, it's the perfect solution! Yes, of course, as a fairy and as a fairy country — Yes, exactly... But what luck that she studied with you. I'm afraid that's another dumb law that managed to get on the books: no magic in a fairyland!... But of course not: it wouldn't apply to her. She's not an Ozite and she's not in Oz... But *what* luck! Now it all depends on Polychrome. Well, wish her luck from us. Thanks so much for calling, Your Fayship. We'll be in touch..."

Glinda hung up — or anyway let the flower go. It trembled into silence. "That was Fairy Queen Lurline," she said a bit redundantly.

## c h a p t e r            t h i r t y - t w o

"Magic?" said Almira Gulch, "Tell me more. And do have another slice of cake." She pushed the commercial coconut cake towards the Shabby Man. She couldn't understand why but she thought this was the most delightful old codger she had ever seen. She felt she could deny him nothing.

"Well, yes, in my travels I've seen a great many things and I can assure you: magic does exist."

"You don't say? Magic, ey? And would that be anything like—er, witchcraft?" Almira had some little sneaky designs of her own.

"Yes, indeed," assured the Shabby Man. "Some witchcraft is very respectable—and almost as strong as 'real' magic. I've seen all sorts."

"Oh, of course it's the respectable sort I meant. Do you—er, happen to be able to *do* any magic?"

"Well, no, not personally. But I've seen a lot of it done," the man bragged, exaggerating even to the point of falsehood. "I think I'd almost be able to tell by watching whether a spell or a charm was being done properly."

"Oh, you would? Mm, how interesting. And having seen so much magic, you don't, I take it, object to it in principle?"

"Oh, goodness, no," affirmed the visitor.

"Or—er, witchcraft?"

"Why, no," said the same man, perhaps not quite so affirmatively but thinking of all the benevolent enchantments of Glinda the Good and possibly also of the innocent tricks of the Wizard of Oz.

"I'm glad to hear you say that," admitted Miss Gulch. "You see, I've taken up a new hobby, since I retired and moved over here to the river. It helps to pass the time. I was hoping to have the assistance of this naughty creature—" Here she roguishly pulled the tail of the white cat that curled around the statuette of a pug dog. The cat growled indulgently. "But seeing you're the associate—almost—of magicians, that's even better.

"I've been wanting to try an experiment. I think I'm almost

ready for it. And the dealer I order from in Kansas City says the ingredients are guaranteed to work."

"What experiment do you have in mind?" said Shag complacently, pretending interest. Actually, now that he'd found Eureka he was impatient to be away back to Oz. But there was not that great a rush. Besides, he had somehow to lure the cat a way from its de facto possessor. It might be a good idea to see if the old woman had any actual—er, witchcraft that might be a factor that would have to be reckoned with.

"Now you won't be shocked at what I'm going to propose?" the woman wheedled, almost simpering. After all, what she had in mind would be strictly illegal—if legislators had enough imagination to believe it were possible.

"Oh, I'm sure a fine woman like you wouldn't be planning to do anything wicked," flattered the Shabby Man grossly.

Miss Gulch was just vain enough to be able to accept the assurance as genuine. "Well, I'm going to try—no, let's sleep on it! I'll need all evening 'til late in the night to get ready. You'll see tomorrow. I'll make you up a bed on the sofa, and in the morning—"

"Not too late?" The Shabby Man had a sly purpose of his own that he likewise was not going to reveal untimely. It had to take place at noon.

So that's what they did. The wanderer enjoyed a real indoors night for a change. The horsehair sofa was no slicker or more overstuffed than that he could rest quite well on it. Then a session in the bathroom allowed him to appear even a notch or two less shabby when he reported for breakfast.

Eureka had spent the night on the kitchen hearth still curled around the base of her favorite figurine. Now she stretched in a dozen awkward postures and then was ready to eat something from the curds bucket.

Miss Gulch was the least well-rested and composed. She wasn't well-rested at all and her grey hair stuck out in unsightly wisps and straggles. She tended to be snappish and the visitor got a glimpse of what the old Miss Gulch had been like before she

mellowed.

"Do your own breakfast!" she commanded roughly. "An old knockabout like you knows how to fry a bit of bacon over a fire, I'll be bound. There's everything you want in the ice chest. I'll be busy in the next room," and without more ado she re-entered the mysterious pantry and slammed the door.

The Shabby Man looked at Eureka and winked an eye gravely. "You won't be sorry to leave a tyrant like that, will you?" He thought the old woman was playing into his hands. He didn't know feline motivations were not the same a human's. Eureka never minded what people *said*; it was what they *did* that counted. Almira Gulch had taken her in and coddled her; Dorothy had abandoned her. It was by no means certain which way the cat would jump.

The slices off that flitch of bacon tasted good and the Shabby Man wasn't worried. Every day at noon, Ozma had said. He just had to pick up Eureka round about eleven-fifty-five and hold the magnet clearly visible in his hand. And just in case anything missed fire there was the wishing pill.

Why not give better than you got though? When the fixings were all ready Shag knocked at the stillroom door and called, "There's a nice plate of bacon and mush for you here!" before anybody could bite his head off. And when still no one did, "And a hot mug of coffee," he added.

The door perked open, hands grabbed the plate and sup from the floor, and the door shut again, though not actually slammed this time.

It was about ten-thirty when the pantry door finally opened for good. Eureka had spent the time purring and sleeping beside the china statuette, Shag in twiddling his thumbs and humming the new hit number "Ah, Sweet Mystery of Life"; he had to keep his voice in trim and now was a very good time to practice.

"Oh, there you are!" said Miss Gulch, now all smiles and even with her hair tucked roughly into place. "Thanks for my breakfast," and she slid plate and mug into the tin wash-tub. Something seemed to have gone well, to produce this geniality.



“Er—how are you, ma’am?” said the Shabby Men hesitantly. “And now we’re to have the treat of seeing a sample of your—er, witchcraft?”

“Quite so,” said the woman archly. “I’ll need your presence for it. Step this way. But first! Well, I must tell you: I’m planning to bring something to life... Ha-ha! that surprises you? Still, I can but try. Might as well be hanged for a sheep as a goat. But what shall it be? Not that it matters. It’s whether I can do it, not what it happens to, that counts. There! that dog: bring that along. I don’t suppose Madam Puss will mind if her great love comes to life.” Miss Gulch cackled very like the proverbial beldam as she led the way into the swept and dusted and oh, so peculiarly arranged stillroom.

## c h a p t e r   t h i r t y - t h r e e

"It's been a long time since we've been heard from, hasn't it?" said the wogglebug.

"Well, there was nothing to hear, was there?" agreed the quiet kangaroo. "Anyway it's not as if Princess Ozma had a magic phonograph that would play whoever's sounds one wanted to hear."

"Hmm. No. But that's an idea. A sort of companion piece to the Magic Picture, you mean? I might work on it with the Wizard when—or rather, *if I ever* get back to the Emerald City."

"But I suppose Ozma *has* been seeing us—in the said picture..." pursued the kangaroo.

"Oh, yes, I've told you that before. According to my estimate of the situation she will continue—now this sounds paradoxical, I know—to be able to sight everything that's invisible. That is: everything that is subjected to the same magic-induced invisibility as the land of Oz itself, which includes Ozma *herself*, and the magic picture, and everybody in Oz, and everybody that may have strayed out of Oz. But she can't see anything visible, that is, everything out in the world beyond the spell of invisibility. Ergo, she can see us; she just can't see where we are. And without being able to get a 'fix' on us she can't transport us back to Oz."

"Oh, dear, oh, dear," sighed the crestfallen kangaroo. "So it's back to yet another month's leaping and crawling?"

"Well, I can fly occasionally," reminded her companion, "just for variety. But yes, by and large, it's just crawling and leaping. Unless somebody somewhere comes up with a good idea."

Now as it happened, somebody had come up with an idea. It stands to reason that the whole of Faerie was not going to stand by with folded hands and indefinitely do nothing in the face of this awkward situation that had settled down over one of the most important fairylands in the business. After what seemed an infinity of time—and was—the weary and utterly bored crawler and hopper saw something other than the sporadic bird, or group thereof, that flapped across the colorless sky. They saw something *else* in the sky.

"Mar! do stop a moment," cried the sharp-eyed insect. "Do my eyes deceive me or is that as island up there?"

It *was* an island, hazy, indistinct at first, looking very much like a stylized representation of Saturn: a flattish disc projecting horizontally from a round shape wrapped about it and extending up and down above and below it. When the apparition got nearer the vertical part resolved itself into a cohesive but distinctly cloud-like shape, while the lateral bit looked like a floating millstone.

The two earth creatures just gawked as the aerial island drifted nearer. There was an oddly hesitant atmosphere about it; it seemed to hover from side to side; if it had been a sentient creature, one would have said that it seemed to be looking for something.

Well, that's what it was doing: At least, that's what an eye inside its pilot's cabin was doing. Suddenly the eye caught sight of our invisibility-bound wanderers and a hand connected with the eye caused the island to steer directly towards the pair.

Now the two on the invisible ground could see faces: healthy pink faces lying above and at the edge of a grassy bank and peering down at them. "Hurrah! hurrah!" the heads could be faintly heard shouting. "The first ones! Be quick and let down the ladders!"

Now rope ladders were slung down from the green-rimmed verge of the island. The ends of them dangled a hundred yards out of reach. That didn't bother the wogglebug, who took a long skittering start and raised himself on his brown-striped wings and circled high and higher into the sky until his erstwhile companion saw him disappear over the edge of the high-flying body of land. She felt awfully much alone, did the cast-off kangaroo. No way could her highest bounds bring her within reach of the rope-ladder ends that tantalized, still a hundred feet above her. Nor if she could have caught the rope rungs could she have held on by her weak little forepaws or mounted higher.

But the end was not yet. Now she saw, oh, so far away and wavering star-like beyond the rim of floating earth, an angel face, a glowing hand that waved a shining wand. Then the kangaroo

## THE CARELESS KANGAROO OF OZ

---

felt her mind plunked like an all-enveloping cord of a violin. When the reverberations died she found she was standing in a field of rosy clover and a young woman with a merry smile was saying, "That's better. You're safe now. Your cares are over. I think you are the questing kangaroo of Oz. My name is Polychrome. I am the Rainbow's Daughter."

## c h a p t e r            t h i r t y - f o u r

With her wand case round her neck, leaving her arms free, the daughter of the rainbow mounted higher and higher. The floating island on—or rather in—which she found herself was of considerable lateral extent: big enough to contain two small independent countries plus an intervening sort of no-man's-land, but it was not very thick. It needed to contain no mountains and only one very shallow lake, with rivers flowing into it that were scarcely more than a few feet deep. Still, one didn't want heavy inhabitants (a giant frog king, for example) putting a foot through the crust of earth and exposing the mockery of the confection, so the island was as much as a mile thick in places. Just where Poly was climbing the thickness was about half that.

Dim light came from somewhere and when the maiden reached the top she found a glass door facing out on the fog. She was still within the region of the island-girdling cloud, but she had her instructions. She emerged on a damp and squelchy path and took the turning to the right. In about half an hour she came out of the fog into a pretty landscape where everything was pink.

The mist maiden clapped her hands in delight. For the first time since she had parted from her fairy mentor Lurline all those hours before she felt she had a grip on things. Perhaps she might make it home before dark after all.

There she was premature, however, in her hopes. She had the litigious and procrastinating nature of the Pink people to deal with first. The place where Poly emerged from the cloudbank proved to be right at the central point of the Pinkland frontier. She had been lucky in encountering in the region of fog no furious frogs or tiresome turtles but now, safely out in the sunshine as she was, her luck ran out. Marching away from her toward the Pink City was the invisible but fiercely fought-over front line in a war between the Sunrise tribe and the Sunset tribe. Pink mud pies were hurtling back and forth and Poly had completed no more than a few delighted dance steps when a pie caught her in the back of the neck and brought her up short.

## THE CARELESS KANGAROO OF OZ

---

"Ha, ha! a spy!" yelled some rabid voices and a detachment of rednecks ran out of what Polychrome had supposed was an idyllic rose-colored copse nearby.

The rainbow girl was on the verge of tears as she dabbed ineffectually at the mud that splattered her hair and shoulders. "No. I'm not!" she cried indignantly as the angry-hopping Pinks surrounded her.

"Who are you then?" asked one who seemed to have appointed himself spokesman, and the others stood in a circle, knuckles on hips, and made like a tribunal.

"I'm a rain—" started the girl, then checked. With her new university training and graduate fairy's degree she was beginning to know to be circumspect. It might come in handy in a moment to be able to reveal herself as of another profession than that of rainbow maiden and she didn't want to have disqualified herself by already having claimed a social niche that might be of no value.

"Yes?" shrieked the Pinks. "You're a what?"

"That's my name. I am Lady Ima—" lied the quickly cerebrating girl. Having gone so far, she took the bit in her teeth and began to fantasize wildly. "Reigning Spirit of everything moist upon this island. It has come to my attention that you have been taking my mud in vain and I am much displeased..." Oh, if only she could get her hands on her wand, she would show these raving red-necks what was what. But the wand case was at her back; it also grossly besmirched by these wretches' projectile, she had no doubt. She must play for time until she could get at it with dignity.

"First, I shall require you to fetch sponges and remove from my draperies the traces of your handiwork. Afterwards I must be borne in state to the presence of your ruler, where I shall inform her what is to be your fate."

Splat! A rich red pie hit Poly on the forehead and another her knee. Before she knew what was happening the ring of rednecks had jumped her and pinioned her arms. Sponges and state carriages were forgotten as the rainbow's daughter with scant ceremony was hustled off to spend her first night in a pink prison.

Needless to say, in the visitation of her person the wand case with its precious contents was taken away. So was the two-way wrist radio. Well-educated as the girl graduate was (and able to sense keenly every indignity offered her), magically Poly was powerless without her wand.

She spent a dreary two weeks in jail, until the tide of battle in the Mud Mutiny turned. Polychrome was not quite sure whether her captors were of the Sunset or the Sunrise tribe. What difference did it make? The whole conflict was so trivial. What it amounted to was that a quarrel had broken out because the Sunrise bunch wanted the ruler of the Pinks to direct the island pilot so to steer and tip Sky Island that it should always, throughout the daylight hours, appear to be dawn. Naturally, when the Sunsetters got wind of the scheme they protested and, not content even with having things remain as they had always been, required that the island be so directed that it should always seem to be sunset. The exchange of mud pies (there was no proper munitions industry on Sky Island) on the frontier between the two regions was the result.

The insurgent Sky Islanders of the opposing force (be they of the ilk of Sunrise or Sunset) stormed through the streets of the village liberating right and left. When they came to the jail they found a pretty girl crying in a corner and raised her to their shoulders, making her their goddess of freedom for the nonce, and stuck a liberty cap on her head. "But wait!" cried Polychrome. "I can't go without my personal effects!"

"What personal effects are those?" said a redhead who had been denominated ringleader.

"Well, there's a stick I always carry, and a sort of an etui to carry it in. And then I had a nice bracelet I wore for luck. Can you find them anywhere?"

As it turned out, they could. In a drawer in the desk in the jailmaster's office, carelessly slung, were the objects mentioned. The rainbow maiden's captors had not seen any virtue in the wand nor beauty in the "bracelet" (it *was* more functional than strictly pretty) and, for want of a wastebasket, had thrown them

## THE CARELESS KANGAROO OF OZ

---

in the drawer.

The spokesman handed Poly the magic wand—just like that: as easily as that. She no sooner had it in her hands than she recited a spell she had had a whole fortnight to get word-perfect. At once all the side that had set her free were made heroes and all the side that had jailed her dropped dead. Well, not really, but they were dead ducks as far as the Mud Mutiny was concerned. Her liberators were declared the winners and herself the glorious heroine of the day.

Away they marched to the Pink City, with Polychrome urging them on like Delacroix's Liberty, though with draperies safely up to her chin, and the defeated Sky Islanders bound to the victors' chariots, either pulling them or being dragged behind them in the mud.

The Pink City was neutral. The citizens didn't much care what quarter of the sky the sun was in but they did mind the island going around in circles. When the victorious tribesmen arrived and went to the humble dwelling of the country's Girl Ruler, she praised them highly for winning the war but regretted that she was unable to give them the palm. Not only did the losing side object to its always being sunset (or whatever) but so did the Pink Citizens. It was two against one. What to do?

"Oh, for someone really wise," sighed the ruler, "to decide this weighty issue. Or anyway someone with a law degree..."

"I've got one of those!" exclaimed the delighted Polychrome. "Wait a minute. I'm almost sure why, yes, of course, I had Law as my major minor at R.C.O. I'm sure I've got a diploma in that." She turned out her wand case, into which she had stuck her various entitlements from the Royal College as well as her gossamer degrees from the Fairy Lurline.

"Here it is!" The rainbow girl passed around the paper for everyone to see. Then an awed silence fell over the crowd that filled the hut room. The Ruler of the Pinks got up from the kitchen stool which was her throne and indicated that Poly should take her place there.

The Rainbow's Daughter smoothed down her ruffled draper-



ies and tried to appear grave like a lady lawyer. Oh, how she regretted the loss of her mortarboard at that moment. Then she spoke:

"The quality of mercy is not strained.  
It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven,  
And when it doth a rainbow oft appears,  
Creating beauty out of sorry tears.  
So let it be among you. Peace! I say,  
And where you warred let friendship hold its away.  
As for the rise and setting of the sun,  
I here declare it must be half and half:  
The sun may mount until the stroke of noon.  
Beyond that time allow it to go down.  
Remember too that half one's goal achieved  
Is better far than strife and loss of all.  
Obey my counsel and—you'll have a ball!"

The crowd around all exhaled with satisfaction, and then a deafening cheer was raised and Poly was hoisted high and borne in triumph through the city streets.

"What brilliance! What wisdom!" everyone said. "Whenever in future we have a problem the Rainbow's Daughter, Lady Ima, the Raining Spirit, must solve it."

"Yes, and so simple too. The situation now is just like it was before the war."

"Exactly! Such genius!"

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

"Hello, central? Get me Sky Island!"

Fairy Queen Lurline tapped a toe impatiently.

"What?! Not on the line?... Oh, of course! How stupid of me." The queen let go of the tiger lily and turned to Ozma and Glinda. "How idiotic. I forgot what I was about. Naturally there's no fairy-phone connection with an aerial island. I was supposed to be keying my wrist wireless!"

Belatedly Lurline did as she ought. While she waited, "Do you girls have these?" she enquired, briefly waving her wrist at the others.. "Never mind. I'll send you each one... Hello, Polychrome Rainbowsdaughter? Is that you? Well, at last! Where have you been? I mean, where has your wrist been? I mean, where has your radio been?! Oh. I'm so rattled. I've been trying to get you for weeks now—well, days anyway. Listen, dear, something's come up. I'm in conference with these people at the Emerald City... 'Who?' Wait a second. You there sorry, darling, what's your name? Ozma! Yes, exactly and her friend... Oh, you know: that witch that lives in the South. Yes. Well, we're worried silly. You know that ridiculous spell they cast over Oz—You don't?! Well, of course, you wouldn't; as a fairy you'd pass right through and never notice. But anyway they're at their wits' end—me too, of course, but I got to that state even sooner. I'm no good in a crisis, you know that. But the thing is: Oz is now invisible—to everybody except fairies. Radio and telegraph waves still get through; the thing only affects *sight*. Well, Ozites are beginning to disappear left, right, and center. We've got to retrieve them somehow but the way this spell works we can't see where they are any more than the outside world can see into Oz... Yes, I could, of course! but, Great Fays, I've got to get back to Burzee, I can spend time flying around the whole of Sempernunquam looking for stray bobolinks that have wandered out of Oz. I've got a waiting list of artisans that need to get asses' heads attached. But listen, dear: we realized you'd got ravished away well, obviously not literally!—by this floating island, and then it struck me: *you're a fairy and*

you've got a brain in your head, and you're on this fairy island — Yes, of course we made it! Ages ago; I forget why. But it's the perfect thing. Being fairy it's not affected by the enchantment, so from up there you can see everything Oz and not-Oz. Now what I want you to do is fly around and pick up anybody you see wandering in the deserts. Never mind about the birds; they'll fly to *you* as soon as they see you... What? Oh, well, put her on. Hello, is that the Ruler of the Pinks: This is Fairy Queen Lurline... Well, no, I can't prove it; you'll just have to take my word for it. I want you to let Polychrome be in charge for a while— 'Who?'?! Why, that girl that put you on to talk to me... No, of course her name's not 'Ima'. She must be stringing you a line... Well, maybe she's traveling under an incognito. Anyway, I want you to let *that girl* be in charge of where the island goes for the next few weeks.. Now let me talk to Poly again. Polychrome? Whoever that was seems to think your name is Ima. Well, never mind. Now here's the list of people you're to look out for. Got a pencil? Professor H.M. Wogglebug, T.E. Oh, you do? Yes, of course! Funny thing: apparently he was looking for you when he got lost. Then there's the Good Witch of the North, some villagers from Oogaboo, Prince Tollydiddle of Doodlefump, two Yips, a kangaroo named Marguerite Supial, etc., etc... Got that? Now that part should be fairly easy. But the next bit is tougher. It seems they made an exception to the invisibility thing and one resident of Oz was let out—with his ex-Oz visibility intact. It's been weeks now. They were expecting him back much sooner. They can't do any checking up because of course this Magic Picture effect the Queen here has got won't work now. I know it's the proverbial needle in the stack but there *are* some clues. He's supposed to be in the vicinity of Kansas... 'Who?'? Wait a minute.. Yes, that's right: it's somebody called 'the Shaggy Man' ... Hello, Poly? Hello-hello!... What?!... Well, how extraordinary..."

Queen Lurline turned to her on-hearers, looking very puzzled. "They say Polychrome has fainted."

The Shaggy Man and Eureka the cat staggered from the clap-board-house scullery, coughing and sneezing, gladder but scarcely wiser, and needing fresh air badly. After them limped a little china dog. No one else followed. Almira Gulch was too busy doing an Indian war dance of triumph.

She had brought it off! She the formerly richest woman in Tolaworth county (until that wretched bank failure), had gone on to new glories! She was a practising sorceress! She had hardly dared hope so much but the bringing-to-life had gone like a charm. Well, it *was* a charm, and P. Potter Porter's packets and coils of wire and fuses had *worked*—not a little helped by her own dexterity, of course. She probably had the gift, as others had green thumbs or could see auras.

Meanwhile the stench was pretty overpowering. Those purple and grey powders had burnt with a dreadful smoke. She could hardly see what she was doing. And it probably wasn't doing her any good to remain here in the residue of the escaping fumes.

She passed through the kitchen and out into the garden. The tramp was just standing there by the gate, looking a big bemused, with a cat under one arm and a dog under the other. Also he was holding in one hand—what was it?; it looked for all the world like a small horseshoe-shaped magnet. What was he up to? But she must say, he did seem attractive; she couldn't think why. Anyway, she certainly was going to join him.

Miss Gulch walked forward and put her hand comfortably under the Shaggy Man's elbow with its resident cat.

At that the man started back and seemed to come put of his sort of trance. "Oh, no! you mustn't do that!"

Miss Gulch was hurt. "I thought you'd be pleased! You said you take an interest in magic. Have you ever seen better vivification than that?!"

"Oh, er—no. It was splendid. You—er, did very well," stutered the tramp, strangely vague in his wording. What was the matter with the fellow?

The new-baked sorceress had an idea. "You weren't by any chance thinking of making off with my familiars?" she said insinuatingly.

"Er—no. Pardon me, can you tell me what time it is?"

"What?!" Miss Gulch Looked at her bosom watch. "Seven minutes past twelve. What do you want to know that for?"

The visitor turned actually pale. For a moment he didn't say anything. "I—er, miscalculated. Something hasn't gone the way I thought." Then, as if suddenly a full realization of matters had come over him, he launched out in a most un-Shaggy-Man-like attack. "Oh, you wretched woman!" he yelled. "It's all because of you! If only I'd bided my time patiently. But no, I had to be altruistic—and now I'm stuck here forever!"

Miss Gulch's hurt and anger changed abruptly to alarm. The man was mad! She'd better see to barricading herself in her house. *What* luck that he had elected to be out of it. She turned about and fled along the garden walk. Oh, but wait! what about her familiars? She couldn't leave them in the clutches of the fiend! She cast a hasty glance back but saw the Shaggy Man glaring after her with a really terrifying look of desperation, his face all red and his always protruding eyes quite popping. That was enough. Almira Gulch rushed through the door and bolted it. Then she peered from the kitchen window to see what he would do next. She found she was quivering with apprehension. Would he set fire to the house in his weird inexplicable fit of rage?

What she saw was her erstwhile visitor turning, in his turn, and blundering through the gate and making off at a lurching run across the fields toward the west.

Oh, what a horror of betrayal, despoliation, an abandonment! felt Mica Gulch at that sight.

She threw herself down at the kitchen table and wept as if her heart would break.

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

From boredom, frustration, and near-hopelessness the common-sensical kangaroo changed to a mood of delight and anticipation. She borrowed a pair of mittens from a Pink and for the time being forgot about her quest. She was now suddenly involved in a larger one! and soon felt inspired to play a larger role in it.

It was in the little hut the Pinks had assigned for her use as 'Tween-Queen' that Ruler Pro-Tem Polychrome explained the procedure to her first rescuees. "We won't be going back to Oz 'til we've gathered up all the poor wanderers in the desert. I hope you're not in a frightful rush? Can President Nowitall carry on for you at the college, Professor? I've had word by radio that your children were provided with a can-opener, Madame Kangaroo, so that's all right. We may be as much as a month or two airborne. You see, we have to go all the way to America to pick up one truant." Polychrome, if she had not been a vice-Queen, would be said to have giggled.

"Oh?" said Mar. "Who might that be?"

"Well, he's called the 'Shaggy Man'," said Poly, continuing to blush. "I don't think he has any actual given name."

"Why, I know the Shaggy Man!" exclaimed the kangaroo, and she related the chance encounter on the road all those months ago. "What fun! I mean: what a tragedy! You mean he's lost somewhere in darkest America?"

"Yes, and, you see, his situation isn't like yours and the professor's. He got out into the *visible* world, so he's not just wandering about in a featureless—and, to such as you, invisible—desert. He's going to be much harder to spot, especially since he won't have a clue we're looking for him. Incidentally we're also to keep an eye out for Princess Dorothy's white cat. But I count finding her a virtual impossibility.

"The thing is: though we here on Sky Island, a fairy entity, are immune to the current invisibility spell over Oz—and can thus observe whatever we want both in and out of Oz on the continent of *Sempernunquam*, we have our own invisibility problem out in

the great ‘real’ world. You know, of course, that magic things and beings, except under special circumstances, are unable to be seen by humans in the outside world. Though there may be fairies in the bottoms of all gardens nobody can see them save those rare individuals with fairy eyes.

“In the present case, however, that isn’t the big issue. What is worse is that we too can only dimly see the ‘real’ world. That world is like an old parchment document for us, with faded dim tracery only just visible... just enough to give us our bearings—if only to confuse us!

“It isn’t *quite* hopeless. As things in that world come close to us they can be seen. If a human earthling were somehow to make his way onto Sky Island it—for him—and he for us—would be perfectly palpable and visible. But how to get that close?! with a big unwieldy airborne island.

“We’ll cruise as near as we can in order to try to make out *something* down on the ground. On the other hand we can’t risk getting so close that *we* turn out to be fully visible from the earth’s surface. Fays know! what earthlings might do, now that they have these new flying machines. We wouldn’t want crowds of *them* landing on Sky Island.

“Anyway, we’ll get ourselves to Kansas: that part will be manageable enough—and start trying to locate the poor wandering Shaggy Man...” A romantic tinge came over the Rainbow’s Daughter’s voice. “As I say, it won’t be easy. We’ll have to maintain full-time look-out duty. I’ll need volunteers—”

Mar instantly put in for that assignment. Now she would really feel like she was playing a part “What does it entail?” she wanted to know.

“I’m glad you asked that,” praised the rain fairy. “The island’s pilot has periscopes but they, naturally, are trained out more or less horizontally, simply as an aid to air navigation. No one ever thought of its being desirable to be able to survey the earth beneath. Hence, we’re going to want people—or animals—” here Poly cast acknowledging glances at both the marsupial and the hexa-pod— “stationed continually at points round the perimeter

## THE CARELESS KANGAROO OF OZ

---

of the island (though not at night, of course), simply staring down through binoculars at the ground —”

“Ideal!” said the contributing kangaroo with enthusiasm. “Being acquainted with the Shaggy Man I will recognize him at once.”

“That is: if you can, after all, see him,” warned the fairy. “There is just one little assist we may be able to count on. Luckily for us, anything magic on earth is brilliantly visible to other fairies and magical beings and the Shaggy Man is carrying a magic magnet. There again there are imponderables.” (Polychrome had picked up quite a vocabulary during her months at R.C.O.) “When I knew him he used to carry it in his pocket. In that case, of course, it wouldn’t be any more visible to us than to anyone else. We can only hope that chance allows that for some reason he sometimes has it out in his hand. Then it will show with a very bright glow (to our eyes!) and you’ll be able to pick it up. But it’s a chance in a thousand. Be ready for disappointments...”

Professor Wogglebug agreed to spell the co-operative kangaroo on lookout duty, and when the strayed Oogabooans and Yips and others got themselves collected off the desert and onto the island they too, in order to expedite their own eventual return home, volunteered. The result was that after Sky Island passed over the Atlantic (or Pacific; I forget which) and began to approach Kansas—a regular ring of faces was poised, round the clock, peering down over the grassy banks of the aerinsula. Even at night! When word got around that the Shaggy Man’s magnet might just be able to be caught sight of, glowing, there were a few hardy souls who offered to go on watch during the dark hours. What a feather in somebody’s cap if he should be the one to find the one right grain of sand on the beach. But faithfulest of all on lookout duty was the quixotic kangaroo.

Things were going on at a merry clip aboard the island. When Tattypoo, good witch of the North, was hauled aboard, she had a tendency to take over. At first she even presumed to tell Polychrome what to do, but the rainbow’s daughter radioed Queen Lurline and the latter straightened out the intrusive one:

“Tat? That you? Listen, Poly’s doing all right running the



flying-island concession for the time being, so keep your dainty whites in your pockets, okay? Or if you must throw your weight around, do it in the direction of the Pinks. You might pass the time, for instance, in giving evening classes in simple thaumaturgy among the natives. That'll keep you in practice and keep them out of mischief as well. But nothing they can use to wage war with, of course."

Tattypoo knew better than to dispute with what was in fact, her mother (though the relationship, for the period in question and for both parties, remained in obscurity). She left Polychrome to direct Mr. Tinker in the onward physical progress of the island and devoted herself to creating joy among the Sunsetters and the Sunrisers. She did this by instructing them in the simpler skills of how to make things grow larger or smaller on order or move about from place to place without visible means of support, or change color or appearance—or even to disappear completely (but only briefly!). It was a marvelous new toy for the Sky Islanders and magic became their passion, relieving the boredom that was really all that had been the matter with them and damping the animosities they had formerly given way to merely to have something to do.

The island people with their new accomplishments became quite a trial for their temporary guests. They *would* keep treating the rescued Ozites as guinea-pigs for their new dexterity in magic. As immigrants the Oz people were naturally regarded as more or less expendable and with no rights or dignity of their own. When a Sunsetter wanted to practise teleportation he would move a few Oogabooans hither and yon just for fun, or a Sunriser might make the Prince of Doodlefump or Professor Wogglebug invisible or twelve yards wide, and then Tattypoo would have to come along and undo the damage.

One habit of the mischievous tribes was particularly pervasive. They were all pink already and they insisted that the newcomers conform to prevailing custom and take on that most charming of all colors. When in Rome... They turned them all pink.

## THE CARELESS KANGAROO OF OZ

---

In Polychrome's case one hardly noticed. She was very pink-complexioned to start with. But to see a rose-colored wogglebug or a carmine kangaroo was quite a thrill. The visitors shrugged and for the nonce let the islanders have their way. At least pinkness didn't hurt. Indeed, everyone's health seemed better than usual. They all, all the time, felt in the pink.

## c h a p t e r   t h i r t y - e i g h t

Alice had got very tired of sitting by her sister on the bank so she had run across the field after a rabbit and gone after it down its large hole under the hedge. She fell past the orange marmalade and began to approach the center of the earth. She wondered if she would fall right through the planet—and she did! and came out in the Antipathies, where she had to ask the people what the name of the country was. “Please, ma’am, is this New Zealand or Australia?”

It turned out to be Australia and Alice was on top of Ayres Rook, indeed dangerously near the edge of it. She turned to walk away but the quicker she walked the nearer she moved backwards towards the brink and she was just going to topple—

The Shaggy Man woke almost with a shriek and found himself on the point of falling out of the harness loft where he had taken refuge. His noise wakened the white cat and produced movement in the unsleeping toy dog. Shag’s head was hanging over the edge of the loft floor and he peered down fearfully to see if anybody else had reacted. No, the big room below remained dark. A horse snuffled and another shifted hoofs with a rumble.

What a dream! He thought he was the author of that “Alice” book and he seemed to be following the girl adventurer like an invisible shadow. But Alice herself had not in fact fallen on through the rabbit hole to the other side of the earth. Who had done that? Nobody he knew. Yet somebody he knew had been in Australia. Who was it? Oh, he knew perfectly well, and what was the sense of his dream’s pretending she and he were somebodies else. Why didn’t his dreams call spades spades?

Wearily the man crawled down out of the loft. The cat followed him and the dog followed the cat. The hobo was indifferent to them. He’d got so he didn’t care if they followed or not. He would never get back to Oz now so what did it matter whether he preserved and carefully maintained that stuck-up cat? He had been abandoned by his newmade friends off in that magic land and would never see them again. It was really too dreary to think about.

## THE CARELESS KANGAROO OF OZ

---

He would just put one foot before the other and follow them and not reflect to right or left. Maybe the old life of aimless wandering would reclaim him and after a long time he might forget the so unlikely and briefly glimpsed marvels of Oz.

He'd keep on west. He would get back to the California coast. He might *just* find the magic continent still docked there. He wasn't going to count on it! But for the nonce it was a feeble motivation, just to keep him moving, just to keep him from doing himself an injury.

Eureka the cat didn't oars either. She didn't care for the Shaggy Man, that is. He was nothing to her. She tended rather to miss Miss Gulch—a little bit. Not enough to think of trying to make her way back to her. The cat had somebody looking after her, after a fashion, and that was all that mattered. What she did care about and delighted in was that the amusing china dog had come to life and was there for her to play with. That it had gained life was to Eureka, since her Oz experience, no great marvel; she was merely pleased.

Naturally the dog was not, as in her strange, intuitive, but wrong dream, French. Rather it proved to be English, and cockney at that, but with a heavy American overlay due to the long period it had passed in America after its Royal Doulton manufacture elsewhere.

Curiously, the dog seemed to have a memory of all its years prior to its having come alive just now. If Eureka had been a reflective cat she might have been horrified at the thought that all "insensate" things can perceive what happens to them. A tree in a forest fire suffers all the dread and pain of a sentient creature burning. A flower pulled up by the roots knows the torment a cat would feel if its feet were suddenly yanked off. A plate shattered knows all the keen agony of an animal—or man—torn in a hundred parts. A book at the bottom of a lake dissolves to mush as unwillingly as any feeling being. We are only blessed in that they can't tell us so.

But Toby's fate was not (so far) so grim. He had lost that toe when the sweet silly little girl succeeded in pushing him off the whatnot, but otherwise his experience had been merely boring,

not painful. He had had to sit up so straight so long and peer so concentratedly into the middle distance! Now it was marvelous to let down completely and run around like mad and totally tire oneself out doing things—not with *not* doing them. What though he was china and breakable? He could only smash once and he'd take the chance.

That cat behaved strangely unlike a cat. Toby was glad to accept the fact and the proffered palship. The thing was, of course, that the china dog didn't smell like a dog (or anything) and there-with disappeared all sense of threat for the cat.

The two romped along the country roads and *just* kept the frumpy old Shabby Man in view. They ran and chased and rolicked and rolled and lay down and snuggled. Sometimes Toby helped Eureka forage, though unable to partake of the prey afterwards. Lackadaisically they trailed the haggard hobo across the country, not asking where he was going—or caring.

The group passed through Butterfield again. Shag with his tail between his legs kept well out of the way of the telegraph office and the home of Penelope Carmichael. Eureka didn't bother to reflect that she had spent some weeks in that house or Toby, that he had spent years. Besides, if they were to see Mrs. Carmichael, and she to take note that her former ornament was alive, it would be too unbelievable, too much like she was losing her mind. Better not. Yet was it not a pity to leave her, unknowing, in a world so deprived that a simple thing like a favorite toy's coming to life was utterly impossible?

The wayfarers followed the dirt road on to Dorothy's front-yard gate—and there the journey ends. For they heard a voice through a cloud calling in Elfland tones, frail and far away, yet tinkling like silver bells: "Shaggy Man...! Yoo-hoo! Shaggy Man...."

The old man fell down in a sort of a taking. The cat and the china dog sat one on each side of him and waited patiently. Presently a great mauve kangaroo came bounding along the road and stopped at the garden gate.

It didn't say anything. Kangaroos can't converse in Kansas. It just leaned over and patted the enchanted dog on the head, then

## THE CARELESS KANGAROO OF OZ

---

indicated it should crawl inside her pouch. Next it put out a little weak paw and took a paw of Eureka's. Finally it extended a mittened hand to the gnarled hand of the Shaggy Man.

The kangaroo looked up into the sky, where something seemed to be casting a great pale shadow, though the earthlings could not quite make out what the thing was. The animal seemed to be waiting for something to happen.

In a few moments it did. Then, in spite of all, this part of the story had a happy ending.

## c h a p t e r   t h i r t y - n i n e

The ocean was transflown and Sky Island came to America.

Polychrome, in conference with Mr. Tinker, stayed close to the controls to guide the island as surely as might be to the hoped-for rendezvous somewhere in northeast Kansas. The great blue of the ocean gave way to the great green and then drifted purposefully interiorwards. Sky Island had no motive power of its own. It was borne up and borne on by the air and the winds. But it was susceptible to a good deal of steering. Progress depended always, however, on the prevailing winds and these, it not being hurricane season, were not going that fast.

Poly was growing ever more wrought and fraught. Just a few more days, maybe, and she would be in the presence of her love. How marvelously destiny had played into her hands! It was no wonder that she'd been a silly dear idiot and fainted dead away when she got word from her boss fairy that 1) she was to be in charge of rescue operations from Sky Island, and 2) the final pick-up was to be of her own Shaggy Man—if she could find him. What a perfect stage-setting for the denouement she dreamed of.

As the island glided down toward the mighty Missouri things began to come more into focus. Or rather, they didn't. Where from a great height one had from Sky Island a view as of a great living, clearly outlined, mostly green or yellow-brown map, the closer down toward the surface of the earth the aerinsula descended the vaguer became the shapes of things, though all the while appearing much larger and closer. Poly supposed it was the optical effect of magic. Magic was all around everywhere but it was well known that earthlings couldn't see it. Correlatively, from "the magic side" too the visibility of mundane earthly things was decreased. This was most discouraging but yet not fatal. There was something magic about the Shaggy Man and that was what they were going to beam in on.

Then the watchers on the island got a surprise. In humdrum workaday America there was magic to be seen! a great deal of magic! At night, especially, it was to be observed in a thousand

## THE CARELESS KANGAROO OF OZ

---

pin-prick glows, scattered like the color-reversed product of a vast pepper-mill all across the landscape.

The first individual they picked out for study as possessing this magic was not the Shaggy Man! Far from it. It was a young fellow operating a harrow in a farm field. Polychrome ordered the air-brakes slammed on and then she spent half an hour studying the youth (he looked no more than eighteen) through strong field glasses.

Why should this boy light up, if ever so faintly, against the surrounding haze of non-magicity? The rainbow fairy had no idea. She could only suppose—as she gave orders for the island to “hoist sail” again that it was the magic of contentment that he possessed, and even perhaps only for a moment out of time.

That was the first of many little flare-ups of hope to be followed by disappointment. Larger or smaller glows shone around any number of individuals sighted. Sensitives call those glows “auras” but they are no more than an effect of magic influence. The watchers observed people basking in the magic of success, the magic of achievement, the magic even of rare good health. And of course countless were those who were suffused in the magic of love.

It occurred to Polychrome that if all the magic the Shaggy Man could show was a tiny stolen magnet he might come in a very poor thousandth in the magic-demonstrating stakes. She began to worry that her great quest would after all be vain.

She needn't have worried. They were retracing for the fourth time the road between Princess Dorothy's uncle's farm and the town of Butterfield when a really bright glow lit up the magicometer in the pilot's cabin.

Word was flashed to the look-outs topside and everybody rushed to the grass verges to peer over. Sure:t half a mile below a tiny dot shone like a minuscule star on the evening road. “Something *very* magic is there,” announced the Rainbow's daughter. “Does anyone volunteer to go down and see what it is?”

“That'll be me,” stated the roseate kangaroo matter-of-factly. Since her own ascension to the island by magic means that form



of transportation had no terrors for Mar. Polychrome waved her wand and in a moment the great marsupial waved her tail in a wheat field. A few leaps and bounds and she was at the side of the thing that glowed with magic. It was a funny little toy dog, apparently made of china.

"It was that dog," stated the Shabby Man. They were all (as many as could crowd in) sitting about in the hut of the girl ruler of the Pinks. Refreshments had been passed round and they were trying to catch up on all the ins and outs of this affair that had remained more or less mysterious to those involved (as well, no doubt, as to the reader—and certainly to the writer). "The dog was the cause of all my troubles these last few days and also, of course, the solution to them."

"How fascinating!" said Polychrome the Rainbow's Daughter adoringly. "How do you mean?" The small ceramic pug dog in question stared goggle-eyed and expressionless, scarcely pleased to hear that in his short living life he had been the cause of troubles.

"Ever since my arrival at Miss Gulch's I had been feeling very bucked," related Shag colloquially. "The moment she opened her door and I saw a white cat leap from her shoulder I guessed I'd found Eureka and my quest had been crowned with success. I could linger there in an expansive mood because all I had to do really was to grab the cat at noon any day, hold up my magnet (or not—in case Penelope had accepted it back), and Ozma would see us in the Magic Picture and transport us safe home to Oz.

"I felt so 'bucked' indeed that I thought I'd give a treat to our after all genial hostess—who was now to be deprived of the cat I learned she had come to be fond of. When Almira Gulch began on her magic spells I knew they were doomed to failure. After all, what corner theatrical-props vendor in America actually has any *real* magic for sale?

"I decided to insure success for her. At the crucial moment I swallowed my ration of a single wishing pill provided by the Good Witch Glinda and wished Toby here into life.

"But I shouldn't have done that. Not that I begrudge you life, old chap—" Here the Shabby Man stroked the pug's shiny head. "—but unbeknownst to me that pill was now the only way I had of getting back to Oz. I had no idea that, as you tell me now, all the outer world had, for Oz, been blotted out by the two-way work-

ing of the invisibility spell and Ozma couldn't see me in the Magic Picture or aim any magic at me.

"Imagine the violence of my gradually dawning horror. In a mood of confidence and high spirits I had wantonly dashed my hope of everything I now valued in life. I'm afraid I did poor Miss Gulch a great unkindness in turning away so abruptly there and making off. Perhaps we ought to try to send her some kind of consolation...?"

"If I had any thoughts outside my despair it was to make my way back west again to where the Oz continent had halted the time I came back to America. But what a vain—well, you couldn't even call it a 'hope'.

"I still don't understand. How did you find us? what with all these complications of invisibility..."

"It was Toby!" crowed Miss Polychrome joyously. "We knew finding you wasn't going to be easy—and we *have* been weeks over it. First, the sheer vastness of the area we had to look over, and then, as you say, the strangeness of the magicity, which blurred outlines in a way that made it impossible ever simply to *recognize* you, no matter how sharply your features were etched in the memories of some of us..." Here the rainbow maiden paused significantly.

When she didn't go on at once the Shaggy Man looked up from his wondering attention to the toy dog he had taken in his lap. "Yes, Miss Poly?" he said.

"Well," the girl went on somewhat shortly, "—so we had to look for you another way. We'd been told that any truly magic object we came across would light up, to our eyes, in a special sort of glow, and so we were to look out for your famous magic Love Magnet—"

"But I was fully expecting to give that back to Miss Thacker—Mrs. Carmichael as she is now," put in Shag.

"Yes, of course," agreed Polychrome, "but if we located the magnet in her possession she could surely give us clues as to where you'd gone afterwards. That's why we spent so much time hanging—literally—around Butterfield. But it was all so hopeless: the

## THE CARELESS KANGAROO OF OZ

---

magnet was so tiny and besides there was even chance it would be inside a house or a pocket. Things were further complicated by our astonished discovery that there was a great deal more magic of one sort or another abroad in America than we had ever dreamed of. We had thought that *any* thing we saw glowing magically in that area of Kansas was going to be you, but far from it. So you see, without Toby, who's *all* magic, glowing away then like a little powerhouse, we'd probably never have located you."

The little china dog looked up in the Shabby Man's eyes as if to say nothing at all but just to indicate that it was ready to receive further caresses for its unique contribution. It got them.

Eureka, bored by the adulation another was receiving, stalked out of the hut and sought a different, more amusing scene. Polychrome carried on chatting up her adored one. "But what luck, too, that you all were so much out of doors. I'm afraid even the most potent magic doesn't glow right through house walls."

"Mm." Now that his hash was settled to his liking and the main heads of his mystification satisfied, Shag began to lose interest in the conversation. But gosh, Polychrome still had oodles to say: She wanted to emphasize that not only was she the directrix pro tem of this aerial island and architect of the rescue mission but also a graduate of two institutions of higher learning—if Queen Lurline's seminary on the grass could also be so designated and by now a powerful adept of magic in her own right. For that she would need more time. She proposed a stroll.

"I guess that'll be all right," the man acquiesced casually. Good heavens! he ought to be all fire and flame at such an opportunity!

Some of the on-listeners followed at a respectful distance. Others faded away as the reunited rainbow maiden and the Shaggy Man stepped out of the hut and proceeded along the one long spiral street of the Pink City.

"Yes, you see," began Polychrome confidentially, "you made a great impression on me when we met before on the road to Oz."<sup>§</sup>

"Oh, shucks," demurred her modest companion, "that was

---

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

nothing. I do that to all the girls, *and* fellows. It's no credit to me. It's just the Love Magnet."

"Oh, indeed, that isn't so," protested Poly, not to be reasoned out of her devotion. "Your great worldly wisdom—from all you've seen and experienced in your travels—

"If you mean sleeping in barns and lofts on three continents," pooh-poohed the Shabby Man, keeping up a running obbligation on the girl's remarks.

"Your splendid singing voice—"

"I can warble a few tunes off key."

"Your brilliance as a linguist and navigator and cook and plumber and—oh, I don't know what all—"

"What's going on here, Miss Poly?" the man broke in, obviously not even listening. They had come to a medium-sized plaza that interrupted the long slim sinuosity of the street. In the rosy water of the central fountain a group of Pinks, with shouts and laughter, were dunking a furiously clawing and spitting Eureka.

"Oh, they're turning her pink," dismissed Polychrome. "It's their way of welcoming visitors. Watch out; it'll be your turn soon. Never mind. When you step off the island at last I'll turn everybody back to his natural color."

"You were saying...?" recalled the Shaggy Man.

But now, little by little, the penny was starting to drop for Polychrome. She made one final bid to get her message across. "Nevertheless—in spite of your disclaimers—I *was* impressed by you. At home on the rainbow I could think of nothing but you. I couldn't imagine that you, so young yet learned, could care for a thousand-year-old woman like me without a thought in her head. So I detmined to come to earth and get myself a proper education. So as to be worthy of you, you see..."

The Shaggy Man stood still and looked at her; offered his hand for the lovely girl to shake. "That was mighty nice of you, Miss Poly," he said. But Poly supposed—or did she, really?—that he meant much more.

As they walked onward again the man said: "By the way; back at the Emerald City, how's Princess Dorothy getting on?"

Sky Island latched on to a proper tailwind and in not too long a time it had made the transit back to the skies over Oz again. Mr. Tinker “anchored” the island above the Palace of Magic at the Emerald City and all the rescued foreigners aboard made ready for their descent. The Pinks were sorry to see them go; they had had fun teasing them. They were also a little miffed to see each departing guest lose his pink coloring at the moment that he accepted from Ruler Pro Tom Polychrome a little magic parasol, under which he floated down to the great tree- and statue-populated mall in front of the royal palace. There a cheering throng was gathered to witness the arrival.

All except one. When it came time for a pink parasol to be strapped to her waist, Eureka the cat said, “Miss Rainbowsdaughter, would you be a sport and let me stay pink? It’s always been a favorite color of mine. It’s so distinguished. White cats are a dime a dozen but how often do you run up against a pink one? I’ve found it doesn’t hurt, being pink. Besides, it’ll remind Dorothy of our fun and games in Mangabooland, where I was briefly this color once before.”<sup>§</sup>

“Very well, Eureka,” said a sadder and ultimately wiser Polychrome. Losing one’s illusions of love makes one very wise indeed.

“Oh, and while you’re at it, my dear,” further required the forward-seeing cat, “would you make me a kitten again? Dorothy used to be quite fond of me when I was a kitten. Maybe she’ll stop forgetting all about me whenever she can, if I’m a cute kitten again.”

Such a prestidigitation was nothing for Polychrome with her newly won facility in magic. Persuaded that the cat meant her request in all earnestness, the rainbow fairy complied. Eureka, the white cat, became Eureka the Pink Kitten, and as such was later to become even more celebrated in story and song.\* We’ve

---

§ See *Dorothy and the Wizard in Oz*.

\* See *The Pink Kitten of Oz*. Editor’s. notes.

already heard one of her songs. There will be others.

And so they came down, down, down to the base court before the Palace and Princess Ozma welcomed all the erstwhile wanderers afield most cordially, although a little ruefully. After all, it was her own not very well thought-out idea for an enchantment that had brought about all these trials of exile.

She had the returning ones into the morning room to partake of lacasa—or tamorna juice for those who preferred that—and licorice cookies. All the celebrities crowded in after them, even those who couldn't eat licorice cookies.

Everybody rejoiced to see restored to them the Good Witch of the North and Professor Wogglebug and Prince Tollydiddle and all the others. But the returning heroes could not espy one they, in at least two cases, had been counting very much on seeing.

"Where's Dorothy?" asked the pink kitten, and the Shaggy Man looked very much interested at her question.

"Oh, she and her aunt and uncle *so* much enjoyed their trip around Oz that they've borrowed the red wagon and gone off again," reported Ozma, delighting in the fun she knew her girl friend must be having.

"Even though she knew we were expected back?" said Shag. The Ozward-winged island in the sky has been in constant radio contact with Fairy Queen Lurline and through her with the courts of Oz.

"Well, yes, I'm afraid she did," said Ozma, suddenly feeling awkward at her tactlessness.

"Oh," said Eureka and the Shaggy Man rather flatly. They both got the message loud and clear.

'Never mind,' thought the pink kitten. She had her pal, the complacent china dog, and the two of them could be off and find some fun corner of Oz where they could live and lark about and take pleasure in each other's company.<sup>s</sup> They didn't need any indifferent jumped-up American princesses. But there was

---

<sup>s</sup> See *The China Dog in Oz*. Editor's note.

## THE CARELESS KANGAROO OF OZ

---

one question still in the kitten's mind. "Princess, am I going to be allowed to stay in Oz now?" she asked.

"Oh, I think so," acquiesced the little Girl Ruler graciously. "You've become part of the Oz pantheon by now. People wouldn't really feel comfortable not knowing whether you were safely in Oz or not."

"That goes for Toby too?" pursued the calculating cat.

"He's a charming little creature. Yes, he may stay," signified the princess.

"So much for keeping foreigners out of Oz," whispered Eureka to Toby with a smirk as they walked off. "They lower a veil of invisibility over Oz and right away we penetrate it and become bona fide visa-carrying residents. Some veil!"

But Queen Ozma was doing some whispering too. Belatedly she was realizing just how much she'd put her foot in it. "Poor thing," she whispered to the Shaggy Man, not sensing how much the epithet might apply to him as well. "Eureka's too proud to show it but I know she's hurt. It really was too bad of Dorothy not to be here." And then the queen was shouting—oh, but most elegantly and controlled: "Eureka!" she called. "Eureka!—and Toby! Do come back! You didn't wait to hear what I had to say." And when the animals came frisking back expectantly; "You didn't hear what room I've assigned you here in the palace—that is, if you choose to reside here. And you didn't hear the announcement of the big Welcome Home party in the ballroom this evening! And—er—" Hastily the princess ransacked her imagination for something that might particularly appeal to the proud kitten's pride. "—we have decided that this day shall be named henceforth in your honor!... And tomorrow shall be Toby's Day... And—er, the next one Shaggy Man's Day..." The little princess began to realize just what she'd got herself into.

That night at the ball, when further honors were distributed, the Court Poet put the cherry on Eureka's whipped cream with this:



*"Eureka sat on her haunches, alert.  
She seemed to quiver with intensity  
As she absorbed again the tale of Oz.  
'Twas still the games the air, the light,  
The pleasant sense of hidden mystery.  
But one thing there was different; then she knew:  
It was herself was altered, changed, askew.  
Her old form was now older, that is: younger:  
Eureka was a cat shaped like a kitten!  
She was transformed by her experiences  
She'd had to fend for herself or starve;  
There'd been the old witch with all her tricks,  
And the shaggy man who'd carried her away  
To the queerest island floating in the sky.  
Still, there had been a happy end because  
Eureka found herself once more in Oz.  
A cat inside despite her kitten size,  
She looked down at her paw in some surprise.  
Nor was her fur as white as once had been.  
Still that's the way things always were in Oz.*

*She pricked up her ears and ambled away,  
A fluff of pink kitten on Pink Kitten Day!"*

With the Shaggy Man things were more serious. He was in a very sombre mood as he went to his own old room and got out of his once snazzy Shabs and back into his glamorous formal suit of velvet shags. In a drawer which he emptied of a crowded collection of curios and mementoes he solemnly placed the inventory he had brought back from the Kansas farmhouse to please Dorothy and her relations. The potato peeler, the tobacco pouch, a hair ribbon! Would Dorothy ultimately be any more interested in seeing it than she was him? Into a crammed closet he managed to shove the Oz-map, suitcase and the magic ski-skates that had proven, in America, to be no more than very serviceable walking boots. From a cluttered shelf he took a comb to run through and disarrange his locks and as he did so he knocked an indeterminate piece of—what was it?—to the floor. Abstractedly he put it in his pocket. He was preoccupied about a conversation he felt he could not rest without having.

But it was far into the night, after the gay Homecoming Ball, before he found an opportunity to request a small private audience of Princess Ozma and she, the time to grant it. Then they met in her boudoir where they would not be disturbed.

"I have no one to talk to, your grace," confessed the Shaggy Man. "Not like Eureka with her Toby—"

"Who has?" broke in the young queen lightly. "I often feel very much alone. Whom can a fairy princess-regnant confide in?"

"Why, you have the Wizard!" exclaimed Shag, astonished to consider that he was not the only one in his painful position, and especially with regard to the Ruler of Oz adored by all.

"Concerning every question of wizardry and magic, yes, indeed," she conceded emphatically, "—and even in many matters of statecraft. But modesty forbids that I should ever embarrass the old gentleman by describing my qualms at being a boy trapped in a young girl's body—!"

"Oh. Your Majesty! I had no idea," broke in the Shaggy Man, really struck, even in the midst of his own tribulation, at having

to realize that a condition everyone blandly assumed must delight the fairy ruler was in fact a martyrdom to her.

"No?" said Ozma. "Well, don't be concerned about that just now. Please feel free to speak out. Only be sure I shall not be uncomprehending."

The Shaggy Man took courage to begin: "I guess it started when I stowed away on a ship from Portland," said he, trying to feel at ease in a jade and plush easy chair. Ozma gestured to an end-table box of ozberry dope-sticks, the innocuous flavor cylinders Ozites suck on in moments of contemplation or relaxation. "It was bound for Far Eastern ports, though I didn't much care where it was going. I was discovered on the sixth day out and they set me to unplugging the scuppers to earn my keep. We put in at Rabaul and Port Moresby and after a while we cut to Brisbane. I jumped ship there. I made my way in slow stages to Sydney, just after Christmas of the year.

"I'd got a job as a roustabout with a little traveling circus. I fed and watered the animals. Those principally consisted of a troupe of trained kangaroos. You can imagine how my mind went back when I met the crying kangaroo Marguerite on our tour not too long ago around this country...?"

"I remember Mar," agreed the fairy. "She was presented this afternoon. One of the victims of the invisibility spell, I understand."

"That's right, your grace. Nice creature." Shaggy smiled. "But what she, all unknowing, set me to remembering was New Year's Eve in Sydney. I'd just finished bedding down the jumpers after their gala evening performance. I'm a fellow that's always enjoyed public festivities like the Fourth of July and the Twenty-first of August—" here a graceful dip of the head to Ozma, "Labor Day, and New Year's Eve. I wasn't going to miss my only one of that last in Australia.

"I joined the crowd milling slowly along toward the harbor. About eleven-thirty the slow movement stopped. We were stuck, just short of a quayside plaza where you could tell by the set-pieces that fireworks were going to be let off at midnight.

"I came to stand behind an elderly man and a little girl. The

## THE CARELESS KANGAROO OF OZ

---

latter soon caught my attention. I'm afraid they always do." The speaker looked abashed. "Like the man that wrote *Alice in Wonderland*, so I've heard. Well, maybe not *quite* like him. I couldn't help overhearing their talk—and then I fell like never before. I hadn't yet even seen her, full-face, but the sprightliness, the charm, of her forthright innocent remarks made my heart turn over. Maybe nostalgia had something to do with it too: her American speech. I listened—eavesdropped, if you will—raptly. I couldn't get over the impression. And fortunately I was trapped for at least another forty-five minutes. Every remark of hers that reached my ears was engraved on my memory and I soon knew what her name was, and that of her uncle, and where they lived in America, and how long they planned to remain in Australia... You will have guessed who I had found."

"I will have guessed," said Ozma.

"We never spoke. I doubt that Dorothy was ever aware of my presence in her close proximity for an hour that magic midnight." The Shaggy Man waxed lyrical. "The fireworks? I hardly remember what they were like. I was only aware of her.

"I never saw her again in Australia. As for the white kitten, I have no idea if it was before or after that that the two got together. I've never told Dorothy I 'knew' her all that long time ago, but in fact she had given me a goal. When I finally made my way back to the States I took the Kansas farm for my destination.

"That too was an amazing coincidence: Butterfield and the farm lying so near each other. For me, the adventure that brought us to Oz had its climax at its very beginning! The rest has been 'happily ever after' as far as I'm concerned. Well, not completely happy. As you know, my long-dead conscience was brought back to life and I had no peace 'til I tried to make good one or two transgressions from my earlier life."

"You came through with flying colors, I think," said the little queen, "although you had need of a little assist here and there. But now, dear Shaggy, what is your problem?"

"Am I right to stay in Oz?!" broke out the old fellow with a cry from the heart. "Dorothy cares nothing for me. It's evident now.

And why should she? Mine is a love that dare not speak its name. The whole world would cry out with disgust if it knew — not least the pure young princess herself. Nothing can ever come of it. It will be suffering for me not ever to be able to speak — yet worse, for everyone, if I ever did dare name my devotion. What am I to do, your highness? Please advise me!"

"You're not the only one," said the beautiful fairy girl, with just a hint of mocking bitterness.

The Shaggy Man stared. "What do you mean, your grace?"

"Even fairies can love" stated the princess. "Did it never occur to you to wonder what some of the rest of us are feeling?"

The man quite stuttered in his astonishment.

"Why—but... but you love Dorothy, of course. Everyone does. And she loves you! I've seen the signs. Why, she's crazy about you."

"A schoolgirl crush," almost dismissed Ozma. "honest and true—for as long as it lasts. But she'll grow out of it as she grows up."

"As'?" queried Shag, not missing a word. "Don't you mean 'if'? This is Oz. Dorothy may never grow up. In fact I'm sure I've heard already that she's decided not to. Her schoolgirl crush, as you call it, could last forever."

"A most unnatural state of affairs—which could change from one day to the next whenever she should decide to begin to age. But I may never age, and here I am, stuck in a devotion quite as strong and as hopeless as yours. So stay around, Shaggy; we'll be company for each other in our misery," laughed the fairy—with only the tiniest undertone of despair in her voice.

"What do you mean, your grace?" repeated the Shaggy Man, forgetting he had been all set never to shock anybody and now shocked himself.

"Did you think ours was just a mild arms-about-waists girl chumship?" asked the princess. "It is such stronger than that, from my side."

"But you—are two girls!" blurted Shag, hating to believe.

"One of us is," countered the queen. "As for myself, I was born

## THE CARELESS KANGAROO OF OZ

---

a female—so I’m told. And I have been returned to that condition. But I grew up a boy! Psychologists are beginning to teach us that attitudes and ways of thinking acquired in childhood never change. I shall always think and feel—but with luck won’t always act—like a male.

“Seen from that viewpoint, my emotions concerning Dorothy are not unnatural. She is my ideal.”

“Oh, your highness...” The Shaggy Man gave a long sigh. Now he knew he would not be leaving Oz. In his love he was not totally alone. He and the Queen would share a secret—and never speak of it.

## c h a p t e r      f o r t y - t h r e e

Sky Island hung over the Emerald City of Oz all night. Polychrome had her adieux to take of various of the peculiar Pinks who had become her friends, or at any rate her near acquaintances, in these weeks aboard the island. But at daybreak she made her departure amid a chorus of exhortations for her to visit the Sky Islanders again whenever she liked; they would always value her counsel.

Bright and early she was at Ozma's palace gate. The green-whiskered army of Oz let her in and accompanied her to the queen's bedchamber. "Why, Poly!" said that dignitary as she struggled into her peignoir, a little groggy after her late night's deep talk with the Shaggy Man. "Here, sit on the edge of the bed. Omby Amby!" she called out to the antechamber. "Tell Jellia to bring breakfast tea—or dewdrops—for two in here... Thanks."

"Forgive me for calling so early, Your Majesty, said the Rainbow's daughter. "I have a boon to a of you."

"Boon away," commanded Ozma jocularly.

First Poly had to explain the purpose of her boon. 'The long tale of her infatuation, her exertions to become worthy of her love, and her ultimate, off-hand, scarcely comprehending rejection came out.

"Oh, Polychrome, my dear," cried the princess. "You too? This is old-home week for unrequited loves—" and then she found she'd tripped herself into a necessity of revealing the range and depth of that same Shaggy Man's devotion to Princess Dorothy. Of the torch she herself was carrying she dared, of course, say nothing.

"Yes, I realized that, your grace," said Poly solemnly. "Little remarks he let drop. I wish the princess well of his affection. Thank fays! I didn't blurt out to him more than I did. It was embarrassing enough as it was."

"Imagine," mused the surprised queen. "Shaggy said nothing of all that to me."

"He wouldn't," said Polychrome bitterly. "Just the same, he

## THE CARELESS KANGAROO OF OZ

---

knows. And I can't live with the awareness of that knowledge. That's the boon I would ask, your majesty."

"What is?"

"Will you cast a fairy spell and make the Shaggy Man forget he ever laid eyes on me?"

"Why, you can do that yourself, my dear," reminded Ozma.

"I know. But my request is two-pronged. I want you also to make me forget I ever laid eyes on him. I want that even more than the other."

"Oh, dear Poly... I'm so very sorry," mourned the queen of Oz. But she granted the request.

Afterwards Polychrome felt better and wondered how she came to be sitting on Ozma's bed enjoying mint tea and—wonder of wonders—cloud cakes!

"Wherever did you get them, your grace? How super," crowed the rainbow girl, anticipating again a slangism by some years. "Why, these are as good as I've ever had! Just like father used to make."

"He did," confessed Ozma with amusement. "Your sisters came to see me once—"

"Aquarelle—and Regenvlaag and Iris and them?" broke in Poly.

"Those are the ones," laughed Ozma.

"What in the whirl!" marveled the rain girl. "Whatever for?"

"They were worried about you, of course. They wanted you home! They had their lunches with them and offered me cloud cakes. When I raved about them they absolutely insisted I take all they had. I put them in the ice-box—and I see Jellia has been thoughtful enough to serve them now."

"Oh, it's true," declared Polychrome. "I've got to get home to the rainbow! Dad must have given me up for lost by now... Why in Oz have I been away from it all this time?" puzzled the girl.

"Don't forget there's been your studies," reminded Ozma. "I'm very pleased you've gone in for higher learning. You'll enjoy your knowledge now in future... and the friends you've made."

"Friends," mused Poly. "Yes, I remember a boy called Fex... when I first enrolled at the college. I wonder what ever became



of him...”

“Sub-Registrar Fex?” said Ozma, startled. “Why, I noticed him hanging around at the audience yesterday—”

“Fex?!” cried Polychrome. “Is he here? I want to see him!... badly. How strange...”

So Ozma let her go. A little later in the morning she looked out of a window and saw a pink and gold young lady in flowing draperies walking in the garden with a slim curly-haired youth in a student cap. The fairy queen of Oz arranged for a brief rainstorm to occur soon out of a clear sky—but not too soon.

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

Ozma was back on her throne again, ready for the day's work. Close beside her chair stood the now particularly attentive Shaggy Man, and Tik-Tok the clockwork man and Jack Pumpkinhead and the Sawhorse were also in attendance, just in case the queen should need some advice in an especially knotty question of justice or protocol.

First to come bounding into the presence chamber for an interview was the corrigible kangaroo, Marguerite Supial. She was in quest of a quest—or to put it another way: she knew she had left home looking for something but that was so long ago that she had forgotten what it was and she wanted putting back on the tracks by Queen Ozma or maybe even the Shaggy Man or anybody who might happen to recall if she had happened to mention what it was she had happened to leave her home in search of.

Since her descent from the clouds, where she had done yeoman service as look-out and scout in the Sky Island rescue operation, Mar had fleeted the time carelessly with the wogglebug and the pink kitten and the china dog and other friends of varying degrees of newness. Now, however, the Professor had returned to his college and the cat and dog had stolen away on their (platonic) honeymoon and the Woozy and the Hungry Tiger hadn't a clue that their kangaroo chum had ever originally been looking for anything.

Mar genuflected and groveled and so on, and then launched into her plea: "Oh, Your Highness, can you help me find what I'm looking for?!"

"Perhaps I can," replied Ozma with a smile, "if only I know what it *is* you're looking for."

"That's the trouble, you see. I don't remember! I know it was frightfully important at the time, but so much has happened since that must have seemed even more important that it's quite driven it out of my head. Oh, dear, it would be awful to go home and not even know whether I'd fulfilled my quest or not." Startlingly the kangaroo burst into overwrought tears and put her paws to her face.

Then suddenly she checked, withdrew her hands from her face and stared at them. Just at that moment the quizzically on-looking Shaggy Man drew something from his pocket and held it forth for all to see.

"Would this be what you were looking for?" he asked.

"Oh, my stars and stumbling-blocks!" screamed the kangaroo. "My mi-, mi-, mi-..."

"Your miniature?" enquired Ozma politely, who was thinking of lockets.

"Your mill-stone?" suggested Tik-Tok.

"No. I think she's talking about her midget," put in the pumpkinhead.

"Her minaret, obviously," dismissed the Sawhorse.

Other courtiers suggested mistletoe, minstrels, minnows, midwives, minuets, mignonettes, minks, and mints, while the cacophonous kangaroo continued to stutter and stare, first at her mittened paws and then at the curious object that the Shaggy Man was holding forth.

"My mittens!" at last shrieked Mar and fell in a heap.

The others rushed to her and comforted her with rose water and at last the kangaroo regained both senses and calmness and said, "My mittens. Of course. That's what I was in want of and I started out to find Grandmother Gnit to make me new ones, but then I found I had to find a missing bit of Grandma—and then I got sidetracked. Wherever did you find it?" She turned to the Shaggy Man wonderingly.

"I'm afraid I stole it," confessed the not so corrigible ex-hobo. "You all know how I became a collector on a grand scale. When we journeyed to Fuddlecumjig I knew I had to have a souvenir of *that* inimitable place. So when I saw the old lady go to pieces in her garden I picked up one of them. Just one little piece of an old lady. I thought it would never be missed. I was wrong."

He held out the fragment of Madame Gnit's head, hair, and mobcap and Mar took it gratefully. "Thank you so much. Of course I don't really need her for mittens now since the Sky Islanders gave me these nice pink ones, but Grandmother will be glad to

## THE CARELESS KANGAROO OF OZ

---

have all her wits about her again. So I think I'll be off to return her her piece." And she popped it in her pouch.

"If you lose your mittens again, Mrs. Supial," said Ozma kindly, "come to me and we'll look for them in the Magic Picture. Only, just make sure you don't lose them outside Oz," she finished a little hedgingly. There was a problem that would not solve itself for yet a while.

The courtiers watched the quaint kangaroo hop away down the green carpet to the throne-room door and then the little fairy ruler turned to her supporter. "You'll get a complete conscience yet, Shaggy," she said with an ironic smile. "Maybe even one that works ahead of time. And to keep you on the straight and narrow I'll give you this."

Here the princess took from her neck a green ozyinium locket and opened it to reveal a charming three-quarters portrait of Princess Dorothy with abundant blond hair and a picture hat miles too big for her just clinging by no known means to the farthest-back strands of her hair. "When you look at this you'll remember not to 'take things' or fib or cheat or betray those who trust you or hurt people purposely or—" The young queen's expression went from lightly teasing to quite solemn. "—or ever try show too much the love you feel."

• • • • •

Mar the kangaroo hopped away home into the Quadling country, this time quite without extraneous adventures. It was about time.

She stopped at Fuddlecumjig to return to Grandmother Gnit her missing piece and great was the gratification of the old lady to be all there again. "But what's this, my dear?" she said, indicating a pretty green hair ribbon that now crowned the lace mobcap. "I do believe something new has been added."

"Yes, that's odd, isn't it?" agreed the marsupial. "It was there when the Shaggy Man handed it back to me. Must be something else he picked up on his travels. He's quite a collector, you know. But I think he's learning now to keep it within bounds. After all,

it's not what you collect with your hands that counts but only with the heart."

• • • • •

Coffee was on (I *guess* kangaroos drink coffee; anyway in Oz) when Mar walked in at home. Tronto had learned, through bitter necessity, how to make it. Indeed, in the interval of their parentlessness each of the children had become an expert in at least one dish and they could now feed themselves without a can opener. Meluel could make chocolate-covered oysters and Ophrid could do the elephant's-feet-in-aspic, Zelix's anchovy pudding was a household staple, and Plonch's popcorn soup was celebrated as far away as Bunnybury.

The casual kangaroo shook off the children's affectations of indifference at her return and went to her room for a lie-down.

As she stretched out on the big purple-quilted kangaroo-adapted bed, perhaps her fading mind called up once more the visions of the past to float before it: Queen Ozma on her throne amid the panoply of her magic court. Polychrome the Rainbow's daughter directing with skill and charm the movements of an aerial island. A little bid of woebegone wanderers on a Kansas plain. Herself, wandering as woebegone on an invisible desert. A chattering jackdaw in a high blue Munchkin tree. An alphabetical pronouncement by the Baron of Baroquea. Professor Wogglebug coming in through a doorway. And the trees and the grass in Grandmother's garden at Fuddlecumjig.

Then she rose refreshed and set about an overdue spring cleaning. First she folded her new pink handwear and then absent-mindedly opened the drawer marked "Handkerchiefs" instead of that for Mittens and Mufflers. She gave one look and then a shriek. "Great balls of fire! I must be the most careless creature in all Oz...! *There* are my mittens!!"

Lund

31 August - 7 November 1987