

THE MAGIC
MIRROR
of
OZ

THIS BOOK
is dedicated
to the memory
of
RUTH PLUMLY THOMPSON
with whom an element of the plot was discussed
many years ago

and of
SISSI
a young sweetheart of mine.

This Book is not intended for infants
and should be kept out of their reach.

THE MAGIC MIRROR *of* Oz

THE OZ BOOK FOR 1944

By March Laumer

Founded on and Continuing the
Stories by March Laumer





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C H A P T E R O N E

"That's funny!" said Scraps, the magic Patchwork Girl, one evening in September. In fact, it was in 1917.

"What is?" replied the genial Scarecrow of Oz, and took another piece of cake. Oh, he wasn't going to eat it! He was just fetching it from the refreshment table for Betsy Bobbin, who had requested that boon. She was too busy talking to her great chums Trot and Dorothy to be able to go herself.

Now the Patchwork Girl always looked her clients straight in the eye as she prepared to ladle punch into their cup—or, as in this case, to allow them to take a piece of cake. That was how Scraps came to do a double take and dropped her ladle.

"Why, your eye!" exclaimed the girl.

"I know you did have two of them—

But now one's gone away.

No, there it is! It's just so small!

And misplaced! I must say."

"Whatever are you on about, dear Scraps?" returned the Scarecrow mildly, not altogether pleased at the imputation that he was eyeless in Oza. He lifted his free hand to his face just to be sure.

"No, I'm foolish!" confessed his hostess. "Of course you've both your eyes. But there's something queer about them. Tell

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me, wasn't it always your left eye that was bigger than your right?"

"Right!; left," admitted the straw Ambassador of the Munchkins.

"Well, it isn't now!" and the girl raised her cotton-gloved left hand to point a finger at the Scarecrow's right eye. "That one's definitely larger at this moment." Then she picked up her ladle again.

"That's funny!" said the Scarecrow.

"Indeed it is," replied Scraps, pleased at having caused a small sensation.

"No, that's not what I mean. I don't know if my eyes have been reversed—but they *see* well enough. And they see you picking up the ladle with your left hand. Are you going to dip up more punch?"

"Why, sure," affirmed the girl.

"But I always thought you were right-handed."

"I am! See there! I have shammy patches sewed on my right fingertips so they'll wear longer—because I use them more."

But what was the consternation of the Patchwork Girl when she found that the patches were on her *left* hand. She burst into cotton tears—but the quick-reacting Scarecrow dropped his piece of cake and grabbed her hands.

"Stop it! Scraps. Stop it at once, I say! You mustn't tear off the patches. See there! you're getting the punchbowl all full of cotton batting."

It was quite true. Where the girl in her frenzy had torn at the offending squares of chamois on her left fingertips and palm, gaping holes had appeared in her hand and the stuffing was coming out. She collapsed on a chair.

"I think I am bewitched!" she cried.

"I don't know left from right.

At least—I do! And that's what strikes

My soul with dread tonight."

The commotion at the refreshment table had not been long in attracting the attention of the other revellers at Princess

Dorothy's Thursday evening tea-dance. Miss Betsy came to the board and fetched her piece of cake herself and as she did so asked, "What's up?"

"Something quite odd seems to be going on, Betsy," replied the Scarecrow gravely as he watched her pick up, with her left hand, the piece of mackerel cake he had let fall. Betsy too was, he knew, right-handed.

Mayre Griffith, otherwise known as "Trot", joined the group and ladled herself a refill of punch—with her right hand. Now Trot was known among her intimates to be *left*-handed.

"Don't be alarmed, girls," calmed the Scarecrow before anyone (besides Scraps) had a chance to grow un-calm. "Betsy, would you just mention for me?; which of my two eyes appears larger to you?"

Betsy raised her right hand (the left was full of cake) and pointed to the Scarecrow's right eye. "That one—why, how strange!"

"Yes, isn't it? And that's what's upset poor Scraps - in part." The Patchwork Girl had given up all pretense of playing drinks-dispenser and was rocking from side to side in spiritual agitation. "She may be overdoing it—but look at that clock!"

The wondering eyes of the two young sub-princesses turned to the great ornamental alabaster clock that graced the nearest wall of the Small Ballroom. The long sweep second-hand could be plainly seen moving silently counter-clockwise. Even as they watched, the minute hand clicked nearer to XII. Now those two girls as well broke into tears—ones that rhymed with "fears".

"Oh, Scarecrow, what does it mean?" queried Trot.

The straw man had his chin in his hand and continued to look grave. "I'm very much afraid," he vouchsafed at last, "somehow or other, that all our directions have gone off. Right is no longer right. It's left."

"Where did it go?" asked Betsy, much disoriented—indeed, feeling for the first time what it meant to be 'occidented'.

"That's what we've got to find out," said the Scarecrow solemnly.

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The Patchwork Girl surveyed her ruined hand ruefully and intoned:

“In a world where right’s no longer right,
What’s left? That’s what I’d really like to know.
But if left’s left as well, good night!
It’s time the rest of us got up to go.”

With that she quitted her chair and began to move about the room blowing out the festive candles sadly.

C H A P T E R T W O

It had for years been the aim of the adventurous and amiable Woozy to get his stable-mate, the Sawhorse, to accompany him on a jolly run somewhere to have fun. In the end he began to wonder if it was possible for the taciturn horse to have fun. He seemed to think of nothing but doing his duty, which chiefly consisted, it appeared, in standing in his stall stock-still (admittedly not a hard thing for one who was made of a stock) until such times as he was called for by his mistress, Queen Ozma, when he would run like the wind.

"Oh, come on, Lignum " the Woozy pleaded for the 2012th time. "Let's go off for an adventure somewhere, just the two of us."

To his surprise the Sawhorse replied, "What did you have in mind?"

"Well—er." No longer ever expecting success in his pleas the Woozy had no specific agenda ready. He wasn't going to fail to strike while the iron seemed faintly malleable, however, and he quickly blurted; "Er, we might do a aunt to the country of Glinda the Good. I've never been in the Quadling country, you know."

"That sounds all right," admitted the Sawhorse. "Shall we start now?"

"Oh, gosh," gasped the Woozy, "this is so seldom! But yes—

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indeed! Let's go right now. We'll just let the Girl Ruler know..."

"That'd be Princess Ozma."

"That's the one. Come on!" Without more ado the two unlikely animals, who were about of a size, raced away.

Of course Ozma had let them go—and they had had fun. It wasn't hard for them to have fun; their needs and interests were so limited. The Woozy was content to browse on buttercups and thistles - and for a special treat he would swallow a few bees. We all know what the Woozy's bee-eating amounted to^s. The bees just flew (as they were pleased to do) into his gaping square maw and deposited a bit of honey in his comb-constructed interior; then they flew out again. As for the Sawhorse, he didn't (and couldn't!) eat at all, so had not even foraging to concern himself with.

Presently they fell in with Master Button Bright.

This was a strange youth who sometimes made a visitation in Oz. Unlike the arrivals (in those old days when they did "arrive", i.e., had not yet all settled down permanently in Oz) of celebrities such as Dorothy, Trot, and Betsy, the Wizard Oz Diggs, the Shaggy Man, and others from the great world, which usually seemed to be attended by fanfares or anyway upheavals, small or large, of the normal way of things, Button Bright's appearances in Oz were most often unheralded. He would just quietly fly in, for instance on his magic umbrella, and presently fetch up in a mountain of popcorn or some other quotidian feature of—the Oz—or Mo!—landscape.

This time they found him hanging by his toes from the coping of a treacle well - or, as one would say in America, molasses. When they hauled him out his head was as black as a Zulu's and his hands would not bare shaking.

"Ohdrat!" cursed Button mildly, "whatdidyouhaveto dothatfor?" His words all sticking together. He made feeble clutching gestures as if wanting to get back in the well.

"My dear young fellow," protested the Woozy, "what if you were to fall in? You might be there for years before anyone found

^s Or if we don't, we see *In Other Lands Than Oz*, Editor's note.

you."

"Idon'tcare," returned Master Bright. "I'vegottogetbackin." And before they could stop him he had sailed down quite out of sight into the well, though well and truly clinging to the dreadfully sticky well-rope.

The Woozy and the Sawhorse put up their paws on the well edge and gazed after him. It was awfully black down in there and they couldn't see a thing, but presently they heard a creak of the pulley, saw a jiggling in the rope, and then came a voice that said, "Haulmeup! "

Well, bucket-hauling was not a thing that blunt-hoofed creatures could do very well but at last they managed. When Button Bright presently crawled over the coping he was black or else a very very very dark brown from head to foot—but in his hand he triumphantly held his once-blond straw hat. "Ihadtogobackforthis," he explained, and something white appeared: his teeth in a medium-sized grin.

Unfortunately the molasses well was the only source of 'liquid' in the entire area. How was poor Button to get clean? In the end there was nothing for it but for him to lie down and attempt to snooze while the Woozy, who was ready for his elevenses anyway, licked him free of the sticky element.

"That's better," declared the boy at last, standing up in his still rather coffee-colored golf suit. Then, "Are you going anywhere in particular?"

"No," confessed the Sawhorse and the Woozy, looking at each other for confirmation.

"Oh, good. Then I'll come with you," announced the paradoxical youth.

For a long time there was silence as they walked along. The Sawhorse almost never spoke, Button Bright only opened his mouth when there was a non sequitur that wanted saying, and the Woozy, though fond enough of a conversation, didn't really like talking to himself. At last, however, he did hit on a topic of general interest. "Tell me, please, Master Button, how you got your name."

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Button Bright was silent for a space. Then, "Do you want to hear the real story?" he said.

The Sawhorse made a grumbling noise, but Button Bright, his acquaintance since many years back, knew what he meant. "No, that's just the polite story that was given out to shield delicate girlish sensibility," he explained mystifyingly.

The Woozy, a newer-comer to Emerald City society, looked a question, so Button said, "It was told — when I first got going on my adventures — that, due to my cleverness and keen interest in everything as a child, my father said I was 'bright as a button'." Here the Sawhorse nodded and neighed a bit in satisfaction. "But that's not the real story.

"My birth was a difficult one and in fact my father did not long survive it. He just had strength to murmur the name my parents had planned for me in advance: Saladin Paracelsus de Lambertine Evagne von Smith, and then he expired."

The Woozy became in a trice so interested that he sat right down on an anthill and prepared to listen further. The normally phlegmatic boy, touched by his interest, didn't like to disappoint him and hence waxed more wordy than he had ever been known to be before.

"I was not always phlegmatic, you know," began he. "As you've heard, I was frightfully keen about everything as a baby and as a young child. Indeed, from an infant on I got so excited about every least little thing at all out of the ordinary that my mum had an awful time keeping my didies tidy.

"In the end this irritated my uncle, Dr. Bright, with whom my mother and I had gone to live, so much that when I would feel a tizzy coming on he would bring me up short by commanding, 'Come, come now! Keep—'" and here the boy leaned forward and whispered something in the Woozy's ear that sent them both off into wild titters. The Sawhorse wasn't told; he would have been shocked. The staid animal seemed not to mind being left out, however.

"So that's how I learned to be phlegmatic," concluded Button Bright. "I found it paid - in the end!"

C H A P T E R T H R E E

Till Eulen(Ulen)spiegel [probably from “ulen” to sweep, and “Spiegel”, German huntsmen’s slang for ‘rump, behind’]: a popular and supposedly historical peasant jester and prankster said to have been born at Kneitlingen, Brunswick, in northwestern Germany and presumed to have died on the gallows (or else of the plague) in or about 1360 at Mölln in Schleswig-Holstein, where his gravestone has been pointed out since the sixteenth century.

Eulenspiegel was in all likelihood indeed a historical figure; the name appears in Brunswick sources of the years 1335, 1337, and 1355. The Brunswick customs historian Hermann Bote gives the date, place, and cause (plague) of his death in his world chronicle which covers the years to 1438.

Till was the hero of a popular book that appears to have been compiled in the second half of the fifteenth century by a townsman of Brunswick from invented stories and the older tales of strolling comedians. His mischievous exploits were first recorded in a low-German account that evidently appeared at Lübeck in 1478.

The first extant text of the chapbook in high-German, one of the most popular of its time, was published in Antwerp in 1515. A second text, containing like the first very many Low-German

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words and forms, came from the same press (or else one in Strassbourg) in 1519.

Till's pranks, jests, and practical jokes, which generally depend on a pun: a deliberate literal interpretation of some metaphorical command, and are broadly farcical, often brutal, sometimes obscene, were played upon nobles, clergymen, and burghers. They illustrated the plain people's contempt for a decaying aristocracy, a depraved clergy, and a rising, self-righteous bourgeoisie.

Till has retained his vitality remarkably well through the centuries. The Low-German text was also translated into English and Dutch very early. The Dutch version is the basis of the first translation into French (1532). The Belgian author Charles de Coster succeeded in making Till a delightful incarnation of the Flemish folk spirit and a symbol of the indomitable national will of the Flemings in *La Legende de Thyl Ulenpiegel* (1868). Fischart, Nestroy, Lienhard, Wedekind, and Richard Strauss have embodied his disreputable and improvident spirit in many literary, dramatic, and musical works[§].

But of course Till Orangespiegel in 1917 was to know nothing of all that, though indeed members of his family, which had come up in the world, had been historians in the earliest times of their translation to the continent of Oz. It was one of these who devised the system of chronology still current today in the fairy kingdom. He simply began numbering from the year One at the traditional supposed date of the founding of his own family. This resulted in such curiosities as the ascription / of the planting by the Wizard Wam (still going strong today) of the celebrated "Travelers' Tree" to the year 1120 O.Z. (Ouwe Zeit, Low-German for 'Old Time').

No, our Till didn't even know how he got his name, although it was so anciently traditional in the family. He had devised a folk etymology to explain it when people asked. With his strange hooting laugh, so like the cry of an owl (which he strongly

§ See the *Reader's Encyclopædia* (1950), *Collier's Encyclopædia* (1960) , *Die Brockhaus Enzyklopä* (1968), and *Encyclopædia Britannica* (1969). Editor's note.

resembled), he would relate:

“My dad was a card. Even on the solemn occasion of my birth he couldn’t refrain from taking the mickey out. When he came in to see my mother in the great four-poster bed and there I was looking self-important as heir to all the Orangespiegel glories, he said, ‘What are you going to call it?’

“‘Well,’ said Mum proudly and a little complacently, ‘I think, for the time being, we’ll just call him Baby, ‘til—’

“At that instant my father let off a most violent sneeze, which quite threw my mom into confusion. He hastened to make amends by showing he had been following closely what she said. ‘You’re calling him Baby Till? That’s a nice name. He’s sure to love it.’ And in his scapegrace way he insisted on calling me ‘Baby Till’ from then on.

“In the course of time the ‘Baby’ fell away of itself—and I was left with the name you know today.”

Well, maybe.

The *family* name in any case was not left to Till to interpret. Those ancient historians had left a record. Even Sorceress Glinda had a copy of *Schicksal Der Gegenwart*, in which one could look up:

“Orangespiegel, a corruption of ‘Eulenspiegel’ (Owl-Glass or Owl-Mirror), itself a corruption of ‘Ulenspiegel’ (wipe-ass). (The family arms were two brooms, crossed, superimposed on the hind quarters of a swine and, underneath, the cryptic letters IAPA.)”

The entry went on to relate how, as the family went up in the world, they went down in the world, migrating from Schleswig-Holstein, which itself was flat and low enough, to Holland which was below sea level. This change of venue came to be reflected in the near-legendary Till’s developing from a German folk figure into a Flemish (South Dutch) one. A change was also apparent in the family surname. In deference to the ruling house of the Netherlands the pointless “Eulen” (though they did all *look* like owls!) became “Orange”.

Little was apparently known about the motives for the trans-

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fer of one branch of the family to the Forest of Burzee. Could it be that they were just a little *too* farcical—or even brutal? (one recoils from the thought that they might have been too obscene) and for that reason were driven into exile? But *when* the move was made was faithfully recorded by the historian Orangespiegels. It was in 984 O.Z.

At Burzee at least one member in each generation carried on the tradition for madcap pranks and silly jests. It may have been their baleful influence that caused even the fairies in the Forest to develop a liking for riddles and practical jokes[§]. But so far Oz had been left uncontaminated. It remained for a twentieth- (or, by O.Z. reckoning, twelfth-) century Orangespiegel to plant his preoccupation with looking-glasses and oranges in an obscure corner of Oz, where they presently grew to an obsession that for a while threatened the stability of the whole kingdom.

§ See, again, *In Other Lands Than Oz*. Editor's note.

C H A P T E R F O U R

The Frogman squatted beside his favorite lily pond and puffed and blew. He was feeling a little flat.

Not too long ago he had been the center of great concerns in the capital of the country. He had even been promised that his picture was to appear on the front cover of the book that would be issued describing his exploits. But himself? What was he doing now to maintain his position in the eye of the world?

Nothing. Oh, he had been offered a place at the court of Queen Ozma among the ‘celebrities’ and for a time, a few months, he had revelled in hobnobbing with the great. But for all his recently acquired great size he soon came to realize he was just a small frog in a big pond at the Emerald City. He opted for returning to the land of the Yips, of which he had been made titular ruler. There his size would stand out well against the dimensions of the local pond.

So, okay: there was the pond and it was indeed small potatoes, against which he loomed enormous. But so what? There wasn’t, at the moment, a person—or a frog—in sight to mark his magnitude.

Forlornly he decided he’d hop over and visit his erstwhile traveling companion, the cookie cook. He didn’t care much for her cookies. Somehow, after all, he still preferred a succulent fly

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—though what a lot of them he had to catch nowadays! to keep up his size. And Cayke herself was no very stimulating company. She was well content to sink back into obscurity and get on with her cookie baking.

Oh, well. Hop... flop. He skipped heavily down the lane. Even gravity was against him these days. He'd been able to leap ever so much more sprightly when he was just a tiny thing.

At a bend in the path there was a lookout point with a bench and some cape myrtles. The view from there was rather fine: straight northeast—or was it northwest? He'd never been much good at directions. Frogs are guided by other senses. In the middle distance was the Castle of Light and, beyond, the land of the Quadlings. The Frogman paused.

As his great diaphragm heaved in and out from the mild exertion of the promenade he put up a flipper and rubbed his eyes. Was it his imagination or did things look slightly different than they had done a thousand times in the past?

This region was of course the border marches between Winkieland and Quadlinga but the frontier was not very sharply marked upon the landscape. After a time the yellow sands of the Winkies (the area was also immediately adjacent to the Great Desert) just gradually gave way to the red Martian grass that covered most of the domain of the great Glinda the Good. Sometimes in some places the blend looked rather orange. But today! At the moment there was an orange tinge that stretched right across the whole countryside: paler the sands, darker on the grass. Even as the Frogman looked the orangeness seemed to intensify, even going brownly in spots.

Was this the effect of drought? The Frogman did recall that his pond today had struck him as being smaller than ever. Of course it rarely rained in that arid region but still he did not think it had rained less than normally lately. Certainly there was no unusual heat to be noted. No, this discoloration of the landscape was scarcely the effect of the weather, he decided.

His eye was drawn again to the towering (but still far below him) Castle of Light. He had a notion that the orangeness

emanated from there. Certainly the golden castle (or was it not now rather more bronze-looking?!) stood in a pool, as it were, of the purest orange color to be seen anywhere about. Even now ripples of clearer orangeness were moving out, as from a stone cast in a lake, from the castle as center to the far horizon.

But the greatest surprise was yet to come. while the Frogman watched, a commotion seemed to take place at the top of the castle's tallest tower. Suddenly a great burst of vermilion smoke poured from all the windows and moments later the sound of a great explosion reached his ears. At the same moment the turret of the tower, which the Frogman knew was the Lords of Light's observatory post, flew back on its vast hinge and something black and silver shot out and was launched toward the meridian.

The Frogman watched in awe. Up, up, faster than light, sped the object and was lost to sight in an instant. At the castle smoke still writhed and boiled, but the worst of the fireworks show seemed over.

Here was an event right enough! to put a little color into humdrum existence. The Frogman waited just long enough to be sure nothing else exciting was going to take place for the time being) then he hopped on to Cayke the cookie cook's house.

At least he thought he was making for her place—but when he got where he thought the house was located he saw the shop of Fomm the duffel-grinder—which he *knew* to be situated right at the other end of the village.

How puzzling. The poor frog was completely disoriented by now and hopped on—or rather back—disconsolately, bewilderedly, not paying much attention to where he was going. What was his surprise to come after a quarter of an hour to the comfortable quaint cottage of Cayke the cookie cook! which he knew definitely to have left in quite another place only the day before.

"Yoo-hoo!, Cayke! Where are you?" he shouted from outside her door. Everything was so strange today he was afraid to open it and look in, for fear of what he might find.

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In a moment the door flew open. "I'm here," said Cayke mildly. "Where else should I be?"

"Oh," said the Frogman a little flatly. Then to give himself a posture he said, "Are you baking?"

"No, I'm writing," answered Cayke a little surprisingly. "A letter - to Princess Dorothy's aunt. I need to know how much cardamom to put in that recipe for bismarcks she gave me."

"Oh. Is there cardamom in bismarcks? I didn't know." The Frogman still felt confused but wanted to say something.

"As a matter of fact I'm glad you dropped by," Cayke went on. "I was mentioning you to Mrs. Em. But tell me; do you write your title as one word or two? I know we always *say* 'the Frog Man' — with equal stress on the two syllables."

"Oh, no, it's one word; 'Frogman'," the Frogman hastened to affirm.

"But then," returned Cayke, whom one wouldn't have expected to know a thing about cadence, "wouldn't that be pronounced 'FROG-mun'? as for example , with 'WOOD-mun' —or ' POST-mun' . . .?"

"Or 'MAIL-mun'!" retorted the frog wittily,

"No, it isn't 'MAIL-mun', it's 'MAIL MAN' , said Cayke. "But all right. I see your point." She turned to go back inside.

"May I see what you've written?" called the Frogman.

"Very well. Come in." Cayke handed him the letter.

"Oh, dear," said her friend. "I feared it *might* just be like this. Look!—" He flipped the letter back to her. "Can you read what you yourself have written?"

Cayke retook the paper with a wee gesture of impatience. "Why, of course—I can't," she finished lamely. "Whatever is this gibberish? Did I write that?"

"Which hand did you write it with?" asked the Frogman.

"My right, naturally," said Cayke, and held up her left hand.

"See?" said Mr. F. "That's what I came to see you about. Everything's gone queer today — actually, in the last half hour."

And then he told the story about losing her house and then finding it again.

Cayke, like the young princesses at the Emerald City, was inclined to weep at the sudden strangeness of it all. The Frogman was made of sterner stuff. "I want to find out what this all means!"

"Yes... of course," replied Cayke doubtfully. How in the world was anyone to set about doing that?

The Frogman now told of his first peculiar experience that day: the view he'd had of unusual goings-on at the Castle of Light. "I have a funny feeling all these phenomena are related," he diagnosed. "At least I date my disorientation from just the time when that strange object was propelled from the castle tower into the sky, for right up until then I know I had all my directions in good shape."

"I'm afraid I hardly see any connection," confessed Cayke. "How could the object—like an enormous tea-tray, you say?—have anything to do with left and right?"

"Don't ask me," disclaimed her friend. "But if anyone would know, it would be the Lords. They have a finger in all those pies: the revolutions of the sun and earth, the coming of day and night, the phases of the moon—all that. I think I'll mount a little expedition to go ask... Will you come with me?"

"Oh, dear, no," declined Cayke. "*One* adventure's enough for me. Indeed, more than enough. I'll just get on with my writ—" She stopped.

"Yes," said the Frogman with some complacency, "exactly. How can you get on with it? or anything else: reading your recipe books, for example—or sewing—in case everything's back-to-front as well as right-to-left. Or even going to the store—if it turns out the store is the opposite way from where you'd expect to find it?"

Then the cookie cook did look perplexed - and did shed a tear. "Oh, all right," she sniffed at last. "I don't know what good I can do, I'm sure... But maybe I'll be company for you."

The Frogman admitted that. Cayke was *not* very stimulat-

ing company but she would be much better than nobody. Even a self-confident (and secretly enormously wise) frogman wanted to have one friend when he set out on an expedition, even if it were to be only for a day.

C H A P T E R F I V E

They tapped lightly at the door. They were reluctant to do more—at an hour well after midnight. Ozma might perhaps be asleep; indeed, no doubt was asleep. but she had to be summoned.

“It’s all right,” whispered Trot. “See? there’s light under the door.” And indeed, in a moment the shagreen-covered door opened and a smiling—but somewhat tired-looking—Princess Ozma looked out.

“Oh, Ozma,” exclaimed Dorothy who by now had taken charge of things in her customary way, “the most perplexing problem has come up. May we come in?”

“By all means!” and the little queen/princess stood aside to let Dorothy, Betsy, Trot, the Patchwork Girl, the Scarecrow, Professor Wogglebug, the Cowardly Lion, and the Soldier with the Green Whiskers pass in. “What is it, dears?”

The group were drawn to the only light in the room; the green-shaded hang-lamp that shone over Ozma’s big desk-cum-drawing-board. She explained: “The publishers have been at me frightfully to let them have that map elucidating the course of last year’s adventures here. I promised it ages ago! and they’ve been importunate. I thought I’d get it done this evening while you all were dancing—”

"Yes, we missed you awfully, Ozma," breathed Trot.

"Did you have fun, dears?" asked the gracious little queen. The others were murmuring polite responses when Ozma noticed the Wogglebug bending over the board and staring with great concentration at her work. "Oh, yes! professor," exclaimed the queen. "I must thank you again for all the data supplied from the College. It's been invaluable—"

"Er—hmm!" replied the great insect warily, rubbing his platilla and eying her sceptically. "I'm very glad to hear it, I'm sure. But, your majesty—forgive me!; how useful is your map going to be?"

Ozma frowned and came a step nearer. "I don't know what you mean. It's just a map—supposed to show the route followed by the Frogman and the others in their peregrinations around the Winkie country."

"That's what I thought," concurred the learned one. "But see here: I take it this IS meant for the Winkie country?"

He pointed with his feeler at a large triangle that filled most of the sketch-plan. "Yes, of course." The girl ruler didn't even look at the drawing. She knew what she'd just been cartographizing.

"But it's over here on the right side of the sheet," pointed out the professor. "Normally—as one usually reads a map - that would place the Winkies in the East."

"East?!" exclaimed Ozma. "You don't—!" She got no further in her protest before her eye took in the full extent of the damage. "Farewells and fairies!" cried the girl (who literally never swore) . "Is that what I've spent all night creating?!"

Princess Dorothy had her arm around the shoulders of the indignant queen. "That's what we came to see you about, darling!" she hastened to explain. "Everything's so strange! We thought you might explain—"

"What?" returned Ozma. "I've no idea! How could I have done such a thing?! Look at this lettering! It's all backwards. Well, they'll just have to remedy that as best they can at the publishers'." In her chagrin the princess seemed to be going to

pass on to others a problem that was properly her own. But she WAS vexed and somewhat distraught.

"Will you send this off?" enquired Dorothy, herself surprised.

"I don't know... ! They've been so urgent. But never mind that; what *is* wrong with things?! Look at that calendar. That didn't read backwards when I hung it up there at New Years. It clearly isn't just me; it seems that everything's turned around—"

"Yes, exactly, dear." And Dorothy enumerated all the perplexities the party-goers had experienced in the Small Ballroom.

"Now let's work this out," said Ozma decisively, having got hold of herself again. "You find that all of you now automatically use the opposite hand - or paw - from what, normally, you used to?"

Yes, they all agreed that was so. "And we note that clocks and calendars and everything written or printed reads backwards - if it reads at all," said the princess regnant wilyly .

"Yes, and Scarecs's eyes are reversed," put in Scraps.

"His left was large, his right was small.

His farmer painted them that way.

And so they ever did remain

From nineteen hundred till today."

"Actually I came to life in 1898—by Great World reckoning," demurred the Scarecrow. "That's 1167 local time, of course."

"And, Ozma," added Betsy, "my little silver ring with the peridot in it—look. It's on my right hand now—and I *know* I never took it off, so I couldn't have changed it."

"It's quite evident, my friends," declared the girl ruler, "we've suffered - well, not exactly a sea-change—but, without, apparently, even feeling it, all of us have become, within the last few hours, mirror images of ourselves. And not just us but everything. In all my acquaintance with magic I've never known such a thing to happen - or even be possible!"

"There was Alice," suggested Trot timidly.

"Alice?" said someone.

"Yes—of Wonderland. She was in a mirror-image country."

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Trot was easily the most prone to reading of the three mortal girls who consorted with the young queen.

"Yes, but she went *into* that country," protested Dorothy. After all, everybody knew who Alice was, once they got her pinpointed. "The country didn't come to her, as it were—as seems to have happened here... Anyway it all turned out to be a dream."

"I believe it's an enchantment," resumed Ozma. "But I wonder what the extent of it is. Is it just us here in the palace—or all Oz?!"

"The Wizard would know," affirmed Betsy with decision.

"Of course!" agreed Dorothy. "Let's go ask him!"

"Darlings, he'll be asleep," protested the considerate Ozma. "It's going on two o'clock - I THINK that's what the clock says."

"But, Ozma, this could be serious," said Dorothy. "I don't really think we should wait."

The ruler gave way, and so they all trooped off to see the Wizard.

C H A P T E R S I X

Just outside the Ruby City the animals and Button Bright hitched a lift in a passing buggy. Actually it wasn't the driver who stopped for them but his draft animal—who recognized in the Sawhorse an old pal.

"Hurrhmmh! " whinnied the horse in delighted acknowledgement.

"Lignum!" cried the buff-and-blue cheetah. "By all that's swift! What are you doing here?" - as a cloud of dust caught up with the suddenly stopping equipage.

The Sawhorse didn't answer, of course. He just stepped up and rubbed noses with the engaging animal between the shafts. The others all knew each other, even if slightly, and they took care of explanations. The Woozy told the cheetah's driver, one Levimeyerabloch, an itinerant salesman, how they had got there.

"Oy, Gewalt!" said the peddler when he heard about the plunge into the treacle well.

Then the beige Button Bright (faded from coffee-colored after being out in a brisk rainfall the day before) said; "Okay we ride with you?"

"A ride you're wanting? Sure, why not?" said the affable Lev. There was plenty of room in the gig, since the only addition was the boy from Philadelphia himself. The Sawhorse and Woozy

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trotted along, one each side of the Charming Cheetah.

Now there was talk enough. Lev was not chary of speech nor was his animal, so there was one conversation on the road in front and another in the buggy. "Making for Glinda's palace, are you?" said the peddler, taking an interest.

"Search me," said Button B.

"What's your business there?"

"I don't know."

"Going to get advice from the wise witch?"

"I guess."

"She won't let you down. If she doesn't know herself, she'll look it up in her Great Book of Records. Or else she can do a spell or an incantation that will get results. Is it anything very complicated you're wanting to see her about?"

"Maybe."

"Even so, it won't take her very long. I remember once—" and the peddler in a long reminiscence filled the carriage with convivial talk till they drew up at the ornamental-wrought gates to the grounds of the red palace.

General Jinjur came out to meet them. She had hired on as drill sergeant to Glinda's corps of girl guards after making the good sorceress' better acquaintance—and giving up her ancient antipathy to her - at the famous year-end party at the palace in 1911. "Hm," said she after a glance at the party of arrivals, "bunch of males"—this over her shoulder to Brigadier Sinna Munn, her aide-de-camp. Nevertheless she tried to act cordial (for her!). She knew her mistress entertained a sneaking liking for the sly insinuating merchant.

"Name, rank, and serial number," she demanded of the driver.

"Name; Levimeyerabloch, son of Ritzeplummerezech. The rest I haven't." Lev knew the general's bluff butch manner and didn't mind.

"Button Bright, né Saladin Paracelsus de Lambertine Evagne von Smith, staff-corporal, 814369," replied the American surprisingly.

"Pass on." The general did not accord any notice to the mere animals that accompanied the carriage.

In the palace conservatory that afternoon they found a party in progress. Polychrome the Rainbow's Daughter and the Shaggy Man were there and two tables of bridge were going. Witch Glinda was dummy at one table, a difficult role for her to play at any time, and she rose to come and greet the new arrivals with a smile. When it turned out that Levimeyerabloch and Button Bright were bridge fiends too, a third table was set up and they played till midnight.

"What are you doing in this part of the country, Lev," asked Glinda over a tired grapefruit next morning.

"I'm just on my way through to pay my quarterly call on Mr. Orangespiegel," replied the merchant, "—or the 'Owl Practitioner', as he asks to be called these days... I think he has slight delusions - though whether of grandeur...?"

"His *plans* are grandiose," admitted the witch and poured out ersatz all round. The party needed perking up after the late night.

"Just half a cup, your grace," warned the peddler.

"I thought you liked my ersatz, Lev?"

"I love the rich caffeine effect; it's the coffee I could do without."

"But this is Skim."

"Skim'?"

"Mm. All that nasty coffee taste has been removed. It's just pure caffeine." Levimeyerabloch sipped — and his eyeballs spun round. "Oy, Gewalt! This is Skim? If it feels that good, you can fill it to the brim!"

"With Skim?"

They all laughed — and made a mental note to collect their checks from the sponsor.

"But to get back—" Glinda resumed. "You remember that scheme of Till's to cast the biggest mirror in the world?.. He's been at it for donkey's years."

"That he's still busy with?" asked Lev reflectively.

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"Yes—and I think his plans are nearing fruition. I learn he's imported an inordinate number of tons of the purest silica sand from a pit on the edge of the Deadly Desert. And I understand the gnomes are working over-time shipping in silver and lead. The glass-works Till's had built near his spherodome are vast."

"But how is he ever going to move his mirror once it's finished?—if it ever is. And what's it for?"

"I think it's just one of his famous gags," said the sorceress reassuringly. "As you say, it's going to be so big it *can't* be moved - not in any practical way. So I shouldn't think there'd be too much mischief he can accomplish with it."

"Actually," said Levimeyerabloch, "I'm doing my quarterly call a bit early this time—on an urgent summons from the O.P. I wonder what he wants."

"You've no clue?"

"Not unless the stuff he's ordered is one: an old oil lamp, a pillow tick, a stack of dog-eared books, a set of gnat's eyebrows, and a large—and, I'm afraid, rather smelly—cheese."

"What in the world!" laughed the witch.

But unfortunately in this matter the merchant was being a little disingenuous. The Owl Practitioner's order had read simply; "*Any* thing you have with magic in—no matter how little." But Lev didn't like to worry his hostess with a hint that anything untoward might be going on out there on the alkali flats. He knew Orangespiegel to be essentially good-natured - if a bit of a scamp—and figured he, Lev, would be able to handle any situation he found at the spherodome.

But that hostess was going on. "Actually, he's made *one* strange request of me. He's sent to ask if I could spare three hundred head of oxen! Can you imagine? I thought it might be in connection with attempting to haul his great mirror somewhere, but, rather eccentrically, he added a postscript to his letter; 'Or else one will do.' Now what do you suppose he meant by that?!"

No one could suggest a reasonable explanation. Then Polychrome asked, "Did you send him any oxen?"

"Oh, yes, all I had on hand; I forget the exact number. I understood they were to be merely on loan."

After that the group broke up. Polychrome and the Shaggy Man too were on their way elsewhere: expected, I believe, on a birthday visit to Queen Gloria, wife to Pom the gardener's boy. They'd be leaving later that afternoon but Lev and Button Bright with their attendant creatures were off betimes. Till Orangespiegel had not been unduly urgent in his message to the peddler but he thought there was no sense in dawdling.

"But, say," he said as Button prepared to take his seat beside him again in the buggy, "I never heard what business it was you had with Glinda. Did you get it done?"

"I think so," said the boy provokingly. In fact, he had - but even he didn't know it, though it would echo down the years. But if Levimeyerabloch was dissatisfied with the youth's reply he gave no sign.

"So you'll carry on with me yet a while...?"

"Mmm," said Button Bright, but remembered his training in time and added, "Please."

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

The Owl Practitioner leaned back in his orangewood swivel chair that morning—not too early—and gave a sigh of satisfaction. Things seemed to be going very well indeed. Then he thought of a detail and thrust forward again to ruffle among the papers on his *escritoire*. He ran his finger along the wording of a formula.

“Right. Quite in order. Every point taken care of,” he muttered to himself. Things just needed to keep ticking over as they were doing and soon all would be in readiness.

He gave another sigh, then rose (though he himself would never have used that word) and went to the open oriel. It was always balmy weather, not to say even a bit torrid at times, here in the southwest close to the desert whence blew the mild scirocco. His windows stood almost always open.

Till looked down into the garden. What a sight. Marigolds and nasturtiums in every nook and cranny, and where there weren’t there were orange roses. Such a strange flower, but far the most interesting color of any rose (if one *had* to use the word), even the black ones. Dahlias and chrysanthemums of the proper shade were not lacking either and Till allowed even ugly old zinnias into his garden because they were so sensible as to grow in the right color. He didn’t stand for any yellow, red, or mauve

ones though.

Just one thing displeased him with the sight. The red earth of Terra. There was no getting away from it, if you were Irish. Luckily he *wasn't* Irish—and he would get away from it! Or, rather, it would get away from him. That was the genius of his plan, which called for a gesture so grandiose it would flatter even *his* ego.

He peered away to the far horizon where the great construction rose (crumbs! that word again), *just* barely visible at the extreme point of the cultivable land: not really visible until the sun, at exactly the proper angle, struck a - drat it!—yellow spark from the glass. Never mind; it wasn't the right time of day. But at sunset! when the world was at its most cinnabar... Every day of the waning year drew the world nearer to the perfect configuration. By then all would be ready. There was no rush.

The practitioner's eye was drawn to that same sun. 'Orange old thing!' he thought. 'It probably belongs to me too. Anyway, in spirit. How annoying that its color, the most elemental, surely, in the universe, should have been ignored!' It was a grievance that stretched back to Till's earliest childhood recollections. On his birthday his father, his mother, and his elder sister Pill had each handed him an orange. It was the start of a love affair that never died.

But for the love of three oranges he thought he wouldn't be where he was today. The spell of the tasty spheres had entered into his soul. That's why he lived now in a round orange house he called the 'spherodome'. His mills and workshops were perforce of more functional shapes but at least in the choice of what form the place where he laid his head would have he could please himself.

He leaned on his elbows and reminisced. He remembered the house at New Burzee, the old echoing rooms, the smell of tangerine blossoms from the garden, the scratchy old gramophone, and his sister dancing to the tune of the Burzee Jounce. He and Pill had always been close and when he elected to migrate to Oz after the death of their parents she came with

him. He never felt she shared his missionary zeal, however. She could take things orange or leave them alone.

The only time he had been seriously furious with Pill was when she wore a pink dress. It was understood by all sentient people that the most awful color combination possible was orange and pink. Since orange was the color supreme, obviously pink had to go.

Till turned again into the room and resumed work on his calculations. Oy would be here any day now, he fancied. Oy was an important part of his scheme. Till was going to have to play his cards carefully to insure the peddler's presence on the premises for at least a week. Indeed, it was partly by the arrangements for the playing of cards that he hoped to tempt him to stay.

Levimeyerabloch didn't much care for being called "Oy", reflected Orangespiegel with a smile and ruffled his feathers. It seemed like a bit of a send-up. However, it was necessary that he be 'officially' so designated for the nonce. Anyway, Till had a predilection for calling a rose by any other name.

He rolled the cloudy-orange marbles a little in the deep slot groove that ran round his work-surface. He liked to see his favorite color 'in action', as it were.

Then there was a knock at the door and his sister stuck her head in.

"There's a woozy to see you," she announced.

"What color is it?"

"Blue."

"That goes all right with orange." The practitioner reflected. "Not like with dark brown. Navy-and-sepia are almost as awful as pink-and-orange." Then suddenly, "*What* color did you say?!"

"Blue." Pill's owlish eyes grew larger.

"Naranjas! That couldn't be *the* Woozy - of Oz?!" Till was so excited he jumped from his chair. "What in the world could he be doing here?" Then the practitioner had a sudden pang. What if the celebrated Woozy — whom he had heard of for many years but never so far met - had been sent as an industrial spy? He'd

have to be careful. "Show him in, Pill."

A pattering clumping could be heard on the stairs and then the winning Woozy came in with as big a grin on his smool as a rich spray of orange blossoms between his lips would allow. He advanced to the desk edge, put up his square paws, and laid the spray before Till Orangespiegel.

Of course Till thereupon liked the Woozy a lot. Who, after all, could resist? "I ran on ahead," the animal remarked conversationally. "Button and Oy stopped for lunch—and the others with them."

"You know his - er, nom de metier then?" said Till, pleased again. "You're traveling with Mr. Levimeyerabloch, I take it?"

The Woozy got comfortable on an ottoman and told the circumstances. "I knew there'd be bees among your blossoms so I came on ahead. I heard tell you produce the finest orange-blossom honey in all Quadlinga - if not all Oz."

"Splendid," smiled Orangespiegel. "And er, you'll be in no haste to depart?" He thought he'd just get that point clear.

"Oh, I don't think so. The Sawhorse and I are just out for a run and fun. I don't know about the others."

"Well, let me take you on a tour of the plant," proposed Orangespiegel affably. All idea of industrial espionage had been forgotten. They went out a side door into the garden, where the Woozy communed quietly with the bees for a bit.

"I just like to be with bees," he explained.

"Just as I," said Till understandingly, "like to arrange with oranges" —and he juggled a few nonchalantly.

They strolled on over the annoyingly red grass. "I haven't been able to cultivate a properly orange variety yet," lamented Till. The leisurely walk continued as far as a hedge of Osage orange almost a mile away.

"This is the border of my holdings," Orangespiegel informed, "but I hope very soon to increase them considerably. He turned and pointed, as in a travel poster, across the flat acres to the south which did give a pleasant general impression of orange. "I call this the Orange Free State," he said proudly.

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"Free for orange," pointed out the Woozy perspicaciously. He had heard of Orangespiegel's aversion to rose puce, ultramarine, and ochre. "I don't see all that much yellow or blue."

"Of course not," agreed the O.P. "Aren't all freedoms such? People only want freedom of expression for their own brand of kookiness. They're really annoyed by others' exercise of freedoms they themselves are not interested in - be it a political view or a religion or a sexual orientation or an off-brand skin color."

"Yes, you're quite right," admitted the sensible Woozy.

"Now, as for colors," went on his host, "they have all the rest of Oz to be red, blue, green, yellow, or purple in. Orange is the only one of the six rainbow hues not represented in this country. It isn't fair."

"No more it is." The Woozy chalked up further points.

"So I'm going all out advocating orange," finished Till.

"You do that," said the Woozy. How obliging can you get?

"Now let me show you some of the glass foundry," said the O.P., pleased.

They walked along the hedge path south until they came to a vast shallow circular concrete enclosure where oxen, harnessed to long horizontal sweep rods from which depended sharp-edged rollers, were plodding slowly round and round the circle.

"There are 201 of them," Till explained. "The Sorceress has been very generous... Actually this is just to keep them busy. They've already milled the silica and lead particles sufficiently fine - but finer won't hurt. We'll be ready to melt any day now. I'm only waiting on Oy to arrive—and that should be today, it seems."

"It should be right now," exclaimed the Woozy, whose hearing was very keen. He had picked up the neigh of the arriving Sawhorse far off—out-of sight—at the wicket gate.

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

"I could wish now I'd commanded them to put in a regular road here—or a flight of steps," said the Frogman, gazing down the steep side of Yip Mountain.

"No one ever wants to go down," excupated Cayke reasonably.

"These people are just too shut away," lamented the Frogman. "There's a whole great big world out there just waiting to be explored." He gazed away with longing and nostalgia. He knew—from personal experience.

So did Cayke as a matter of fact but remained unmoved. "It's getting dark already," she complained. "Are you sure this is wise?"

"I very much want to find out what's happened." The Frogman spoke almost sharply. "It's too bad it happened so late in the day but it's no good waiting till tomorrow to try to get particulars."

As a matter of fact what he had experienced today was merely the last straw to dissatisfactions that had been growing in him for months. It was simply no good being a big frog in a small pond: as unsatisfying as the reverse. The Frogman was an artist - of sorts - and knew divine discontent. Now that an excuse, be it ever so feeble, had been found for getting away from stultify-

ing Yipville he was going to take it, no matter what the odds.

"Your jeweled dishpan isn't available, I take it?—for sliding down the mountainside in."

"No!" said the cookie cook decisively. That dishpan! It had caused her enough headaches already. It was ridiculous that she had ever come into possession of such an unlikely treasure. Sometimes she thought it had all been an unkind trick of fate—just to make her look silly. But, of course, if one owned such a valuable, one didn't give up ownership without a struggle. She wasn't going to risk it again by taking it along on this wild goose chase. Besides, it was so heavy—made of rich gold—to haul along, what time they wouldn't be coasting down the slick-grassed slope in it.

"Well, here goes," said the frog resignedly and gave Cayke a flipper to lead her down the precarious descent.

"What about the scares at the bottom?" asked Cayke, remembering too late the real reason why Yips rarely left home.

"What scares?" blustered the Frogman. "Can you name one type scare?"

"Well, no," admitted Cayke. "But everybody says they're there."

"The way they say there are torments in hell - or angels in heaven," the frog gave himself false courage, "but nobody's ever reported back with pictures or proofs."

Unfortunately for his brave words there *were* scares at the bottom. They encountered the first ones two hours later, long after full night had come and they'd reached gentler slopes near the base of the mountain.

The two climbers were not so much tired as hurt and disheveled - by the crag-anchored brambles they had had to cling to in making their perilous way down. Every exposed skin surface of their bodies was scratched and torn. How lucky the Frogman apprised himself for having taken to wearing clothes! The ravages otherwise would have been far greater. The state of his noble garments wouldn't bear thinking of, but luckily, in the dark, he couldn't see them.

Then Cayke gave a scream and fell to the ground. "Something's on me!" she wailed. "*Several* somethings... oh, a whole lot!" She dissolved in shudders.

Now the Frogman felt them too and had his own share of the horrors. It was as if disembodied lips and tongues were gently but insistently licking and sucking at all the scratches he had acquired. It didn't hurt—exactly—but it was dreadful to feel such obscene caresses and not know what was making them. Of course he struck out at whatever it was and felt soft hairy bodies detach and fall away. But every moment more gathered.

"Cayke!" he shouted. "Are you all right? Where are you? Give me your hand!" He blundered in the pitch dark among the trees, still hitting ineffectually at the terror.

He heard Cayke's shrieks again, fainter than he expected. But the two kept calling and crying until, by constantly turning and moving in the direction of the voice, they got nearer each other. At last hand joined flipper. "We must bolt for it!" gasped the frog. "I'd leap—but these trees would bring me down. Just hang onto my coat-tails for dear life and I'll try to get us clear!"

Cayke had sense enough to do as she was told without demur, and thus they blundered among the obstructing trees till at least they were out of the woods and faint starlight was visible. Then miraculously they also felt their tormentors had dropped away, and were lost behind.

They collapsed against the last tree and tried to catch their breath. "What ever was it?" moaned Cayke.

"I tried not to find out!" gasped the frog. "Too dreadful. But I couldn't help feel they were hairy and soft and moist and about as big around as—well, your cookies. Fatter though—more like a muffin. And they seemed to have seven or eight legs."

They never did learn what had attacked them. When daylight came the two were far away and no trace of the scares could be seen on the bodies of the travelers.

What's more, no trace of the couple's painful scratches could be seen. "That's Oz for you!" commented the Frogman when at last he was convinced of the phenomenon. "Every cloud has a

silver lining. The attentions of the scares seem to have had a curative effect!"

But oh! was the cure worth the shuddery process?

Since the adventurers were not, fortunately, to meet the scares again, it may be as well to slake the possible curiosity of readers by stating that what had attacked the two was the large variety of mouth-spiders—who lust for blood. Unlike their very distant relatives, the mouth-bats, they have no teeth to enlarge encountered wounds but just lick greedily at whatever blood is already flowing. Their saliva has a (for them self-defeating) styptic effect.

C H A P T E R N I N E

"We're so sorry to wake you, Oz."

"Not at all, dear lady! Come in, do."

The Wizard knotted the black velvet cord about his dressing gown, not noticing that he bound the knot with his left hand. The others did.

Hesitantly Ozma drew attention to the phenomenon.

The Wizard was bemused. "It's like that all over!" supplied Betsy Bobbin. "Everything's backwards!

"Yes," said Dorothy Gale, "and now the question is; what to do about it?"

The Wizard was inclined to view the matter not too gravely. "I wonder if we *can* do anything about it..? in the middle of the night. Might it not be best to sleep on the problem? Perhaps in the morning we could see it more clearly."

"Oh, I couldn't *face* the dawn," exclaimed Betsy dramatically, "not knowing."

"Right you are then," acquiesced Oz Diggs. "Now come over here, if you please, all of you—" He began to shove furniture around and in a few moments had a semi-circle of comfortable chairs arranged before a big picture window. "This window at least *used* to look out on the east. We'll know when the sun comes up whether the phenomenon is general—or restricted just to

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the palace, or some part of it.”

The party digested this statement for some moments in silence. Then, “*How* will we know, Wizard?” ventured Dorothy. “If we see the sun come up out this east window, how can we tell if we’ve just been imagining things and window and sun are both still in the east? — or if *both* have switched round to the opposite direction?”

“Well done, little Dorothy “ the Wizard laughed. “The best answer I’ve had yet. Frankly, I don’t know. Let’s wait and see.”

So they all sank into overstuffed chairs with grateful sighs - and in a few minutes were sound asleep; all those who *could* sleep. This was what the wise Wizard had had in mind. He chatted for a few minutes longer with Queen Ozma, who was actually the tiredest of all after her exertions at map-making, then allowed the little fairy too to subside into gentle slumber.

Meanwhile Oz (who had already taken the edge off his own sleep need) got busy with his astronomy apparatus. He climbed the steps to the catwalk under the revolvable dome of his observatory, took his seat at the eye end of his great telescope and began slowly to move the focus of the instrument across the starry sky. If east was west and west was east (apparently the two *could* meet; he noted in passing that the moon looked blue, so perhaps it *was* the season for the unusual), surely some sign of it would be discernible in the heavens.

Well, that was reassuring. The map of the constellations appeared reversed — which meant that they at least had remained unchanged! As the Wizard came more and more under the influence of the switch, reversed things began to look more normal, while, conversely, phenomena which maintained their traditional orientation appeared as a mirror image.

Suddenly he braked the slowly panning device. “You two!” he whispered loudly to the Scarecrow and Scraps, who, sleepless, were pacing about, conversing quietly, in the room below. “Just step up here! will you, please.”

The two beings tottered obediently up the ladder. The Wizard wanted confirmation for something highly unlikely he

had just seen: a tiny black object beginning a slow fluttering eccentric trajectory across the broad blue disc of the moon.

"Will you take a look in there?"

Lady first—and the Patchwork Girl applied her eye to the view-hole. In a moment a soft cotton whistle escaped her lips

"Twinkle, twinkle, little bat," she quoted.

"How I wonder what you're at!

Up above the world you fly

Like a tea-tray in the sky."

"A good comparison," acknowledged the Wizard. "It's a mere speck but the thing does look rectangular, oblong—well, like the outline map of Oz itself. And do you notice?; it seems to be turning over and over—or round and round—and giving off blue flashes? I think one side of it's reflecting the light of the moon."

Next the Scarecrow had a look but just at that moment the projectile completed its passage across the moon face and he was disappointed. In the black depths of space only the still-continuing occasional faint blue flashes could be seen.

Even so the learned straw man received an inkling of further data. "Correct me if I'm wrong, Wizard," he said, turning from the instrument, "but do I not sense that the object is drawing away from the earth?"

"Good man! Yes, that's what my own hasty calculations indicate... Well, it's all very mysterious. I hardly know how to proceed further. I'll compare notes tomorrow with the Professor. The observatory at the College is better equipped."

"H. M.," remarked the Patchwork Girl familiarly, "was at the party tonight—but he's gone home. I think he did say he was going to do some observations."

Nothing more could be accomplished before daylight. Even the Wizard got in an extra forty winks before the first clear ray of sun had braved the east... or west? By then our party of observers was awake and sitting all agog at the window. But they saw nothing.

It was little Trot who, standing and coming close to the win-

dow, gazed out and all about and then exclaimed; "Look, everyone! High up—it's getting lighter. But where's the sun?!"

Why, the sun was in the east, of course. Nothing of the strange phenomena observable in Oz could affect *it*. But the observers were *not* in the east. The (formerly) east window they had gathered at looked, at present, straight out into the golden west. At least: it wasn't so *very* golden. Under the paling indigo of the night sky everything in the scene outside looked strangely blue.

Then there was a wild scamper with no ceremony; *out* of the observatory room and down the winding stairway of the Wizard's tower and through anterooms and presence chambers to the broad east-west corridor of the upper storey of the palace ran the crowd of observers straight on to the music room, where they flung open the door—to be met with a burst of golden glory!

They rushed to the windows and there was the orange sun! already well over the horizon and making everything look preternaturally yellow. "Why, I've never known the sun so bright and golden in the east before!" cried Ozma, quite overcome. The scene proved indeed later to have made a marvelously deep impression on the Girl Ruler. She could never afterwards really free herself of a feeling that the land of the morning sun was properly yellow.

"It's never *been* so golden in the east before," constated the Patchwork Girl matter-of-factly. From the high windows of the music room one could see well beyond the walls of the Emerald City where the greenswards blended with the color of the neighboring country. "That's the yellow land of the Winkies," Scraps went on. "And this is the first time they've ever *been* in the East."

C H A P T E R T E N

"I hope I haven't neglected any point," Till muttered to himself. "There's so much-to think of!" He ran his finger down a check-list: "'complete fine-polishing; canting; two installations; fine-tune magic concentration; normals stationed; air coverage —Bay of Pigs'—no, we can scratch that;" his pencil jerked. "phone Lords; order in extra bagels, ice cream, honey'—Er, what does the cheetah eat, Oy?"

"Gazelles," replied Lev looking up from yesterday morning's *Emerald City Gozette*. "'gazelles'," wrote the Owl Practitioner. "'alert for social call; diplomacy...' Hmm, diplomacy..." Then louder, "Tell me, Mr. Lev; are you happy here?"

"'Happy'?" said the peddler, half-preoccupied. An article on an auction of old furniture and nicknacks at the Tin Wood man's palace had claimed his attention. "Unhappy I'm not," he went on, laying down the paper. "Why should you ask?"

"Oh, I just didn't want to think any of you have been bored here. I do appreciate your company and hope you're contented staying on a bit. But, er—just for a change, I wonder how you'd all like to go for an outing today...?"

"Suits me. Where had you in mind?" "Oh, I thought we might drive over the frontier and call on the Lords of Light."

"Could be interesting," admitted the merchant. "I've wanted

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to meet the Lords. I've called there a time or two on my rounds but they've always been out—or said they were."

"They usually are," confirmed Till. "They're rather shy of meeting the public. But we're almost neighbors and I've gained the entrée—a bit. I think they'll see us."

"Fine! I'll have along my samples case."

"If you like. But I had in mind a purely social visit." This was quite a lie—but Till's motives were almost never apparent.

That afternoon, eschewing Levimeyerabloch's flimsy gig, they harnessed the Sawhorse, the cheetah, two oxen, *and* the Woozy to Orangespiegel's heavy-duty dray (with surrey seating arrangement). "What in the world?" said Lev as he took his place among the impromptu livery-workmen.

"You'll forgive," said Orangespiegel. "A whim of mine. While we're at it—as you'll be showing your samples anyway—I thought I'd take along this mirror. He indicated an enormous rectangle of shiny glass in an iron encasement which, single-handed, he had maneuvered into position upon the mattress-padded flatbed by the use of a traveling crane. "—and get the Lords to do a little adjustment on it... I often call on them for such services," he fibbed.

Lev shrugged. "You all right, you fellows?" he called to their harnessed familiars.

The cheetah, Woozy, and Sawhorse all made convivial noises indicating they thought it was quite a lark. So the three human passengers boarded the dray and they started out.

Progress was not rapid. Indeed, the O.P. seemed pointedly to encourage dawdling. Soon after the departure they stopped for a long leisurely late lunch. This was when the bagels and ice cream were consumed. Some bees had trailed the honey pot, so the Woozy got both a meal and a social call. Till contented himself with a few oranges—and a dollop of marmalade for desert. As for the cheetah's feeding, that went on behind a capacious screen erected for the occasion.

After that they all felt, except for the Sawhorse, rather somnolent, so there was another long stop for naps under the friendly

shade of a clump of poincianas.

The scenery was a bit Australian. What verdure there was was really rougure: long levels of dry-looking earth with scanty vegetation. The only real sight that broke the monotony was a distant glimpse, just as they crossed the border into Winkieland, of Till's tall tapering pane of orange glass erected exactly at the utmost corner of the habitable country. Underneath it, on the Oz side, a flash of light betrayed the presence of the newly-cast great polished mirror on its mathematically precisely tilted bed.

Levimeyerabloch took up a pair of binoculars. "Are those oxen I spy there? moving around the perimeter of the glass."

"Mm-hmm," agreed Till. "They're rigged up to keep settling dust constantly removed. And they'll burnish the glass right up to the last moment—or even beyond," he informed cryptically.

The peddler and his companions had been palmed off with an explanation of the practitioner's purposes with mirrors that need not concern us here. Nobody suspected a thing. They rode on.

The sun was beautifully orange and it must have been about five o'clock when the dray trundled over the drawbridge above the moat of molten gold at the Castle of Light. No one answered when they pulled the bell rope.

"Oh, how vexing!" said Till Orangespiegel with satisfaction. "Nobody home." He had been phoning all morning and never got an answer so he knew before they started out there would be nobody to receive them at the Lords'. Even the housekeeper and servants seemed absent, but that was par for the course. The castle staff were well known for ducking out on unauthorized holidays whenever the masters went from home.

The O.P. held the reins and directed as the dray was maneuvered backward through the castle portal and as far into the great reception hall as there was room to jockey it. Levimeyerabloch looked his mystification and presently Orangespiegel deigned to notice the look. "Oh, heavens, I'm not going to drag this thing home again," he protested, indicating the great looking-glass that covered the flatbed. "Now that I've

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got it here I'll leave it—with a note attached. The Lords can do the adjustments and I'll pick it up next time around.

"But now, you chaps, if you'll lend a hand..." The practitioner looked a question at Lev and Button Bright.

The Woozy and the Sawhorse too were an essential part of the act. Together the three men heaved and tugged and got the great mirror shifted from the cart, then held each at a corner to lighten the weight as they laid it gently across the backs of the two animals. Then in a stately grave pavane they moved to the freight elevator.

The trip up to the tippy-top of the castle's central tower was the easiest part of the move. After that was to come another struggle, fairly exertious, to get the mirror positioned where they could leave it. "Now let's see," said Till, chin in hand, apparently in deepest cogitation. In fact, with detailed planning down to the last nut and screw, he knew precisely what he was going to do. Not in vain were all the friendly impromptu calls he had made on the lords of Light over the years. He knew in exact detail the habits, and the working of the apparatus, of the Lords.

"Oh I know!" he now said brightly. "We'll just stand it up in this slot effect—" He gestured toward a construction of two great parallel flanges of steel, like the coin receptacle—only vast—on a slot-machine. "That way it'll be out of the way—and not get trodden on; yet they can't help but notice it."

In fact the device was the Lords' modest, rather old-fashioned, launching pad for data-gathering projectiles they occasionally fired off into orbit around the earth. Immense springs mounted in an angle upward from the contraption toward buttressed walls while others descended into the floor. It was like a vast stationary slingshot—but *so* vast that the casual observer could not descry its function.

Even so, Levimeyerabloch was beginning to grow, suspicious. This whole performance was too pat. There was nothing of the impromptu about it. Nevertheless he was unable to guess what it was all in aid of. When, however, the O.P. next asked for his assistance, he demurred.

"You must forgive me, O.P.," he said with an ingratiating smile. "I don't even know these people. What if they were to come in and find me taking part in the manipulation of their machinery?"

"Oh, very well!" said Till disgruntledly. "You all can wait in the lounge downstairs if you like. I'll just be a tick. But, oh! - if you *would* just do me one little thing—in a few minutes...? You don't have to come back up in the tower! Quite the contrary. I want you, if you will, to go outside; out on the alkali flat beyond the moat, and just hold up this mirror—" Here he took from his pocket a shiny round looking-glass about as big as the palm of a hand .

Lev reached as if to take it but quickly Till withdrew his hand. "Sorry! I have one small adjustment to make to it" — though how one went about "adjusting" a simple highly polished disc of glass and silver was left unexplained. "I'll bring it down to you directly . "

Again Levimeyerabloch lifted his shoulders in a gesture of resignation and turned to re-enter the lift with his companions. But here Button Bright, who had been sitting on a table of logarithms, swinging his legs and poking holes in his straw hat, delivered a small surprise. "I'll stay here," he announced.

Lev and Till looked at him startled, but no one had any objection to make. The others departed and Button looked on idly as Orangespiegel went to a laboratory work-bench, lit a Bunsen burner, and placed the round mirror in the bottom of a wide shallow fireproof stoneware bowl on the table. Then he took from a satchel he carried a twist of paper which contained, it may as well be confessed, the magic precipitates from Levimeyerabloch's pillowcase, oil lamp, cheese, and gnats'-eyebrows, together with any number of other ingredients the Owl Practitioner had been able to accumulate over the years.

The boy slipped down from the table lackadaisically and came and stood near as the O.P. very carefully, not neglecting even one grain, heaped the magic upon the mirror in the bowl. Then from another twist of paper he slid out, over the little

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mound of magic, a dark scarlet powder until the heap of grains underneath was completely covered.

The O.P. glanced at his watch. "6:18," he muttered. "Not bad." He went to a southwest window and looked out. Not a cloud blemished the sunset sky over the desert. That'd be the day! He took up the binoculars and noted with satisfaction that the rays of the setting sun striking through the great upright pane of orange glass fell nearly exactly athwart the long tilted oblong mirror that lay on the desert floor. The oxen had ceased their sweeping action and for the moment the looking-glass shone pristine—and orange! as nothing in this world.

Now Till Orangespiegel made haste. The burner by a simple adjustment, did duty as a blow torch. Till flicked the switch, took up the instrument—and turned to Button Bright. "Stand back," he cautioned brusquely. "There's likely to be a good deal of smoke. You might just open those windows..."

Another glance at the watch. This was the moment. The Owl Practitioner lowered the blow-burner over the bowl, then suddenly switched it to full power. A most horrendous explosion took place and a blinding opaque billow of cochineal smoke choked the room, sending its occupants into violent paroxysms of coughing.

The draft Master Bright had created quickly did its work, however. In a moment the O.P. could be seen flapping his arms in the vermilion murk and then he had regained the work table and was fishing with tongs for the round mirror in the bowl. Strangely, the glass appeared unblackened - and even unorange —by the treatment it had undergone.

It seemed not even to be hot. But then that was magic. "Here, boy!" commanded Orangespiegel. "Run down with this to Oy—Levimeyerabloch. He knows what to do, but if he hesitates, remind him: to hold it—glass up!!—in his open palm and direct it at any moving thing he sees in the upper sky—or, if none, then simply at the zenith... Got that?"

Button nodded, took the small mirror, and went out, running down the stairs in default of the elevator, which no one

had thought to resummon.

Now it was the turn of Till Orangespiegel's most vital project —though all were of the essence: very much so. Using all his strength he set the great lever-cock on the satellite launcher. There was a button he could have touched that would have done it automatically—but he didn't know *every* one of the Lords' secrets.

Next he pulled from right to left the great switch handle on the wall which made the turret roof of the observatory chamber lift and angle back out of the way. All was now in readiness! With crossed fingers—but a nonchalant air—Orangespiegel pressed the trigger that released the cocking mechanism.

So swiftly that eye could not see its passage the huge steel-backed mirror was slung into space. Now if those idiots on the ground were only on their toes...!

C H A P T E R

E L E V E N

"One... more... step, Lao-Tsen," said the Frogman somewhat anticipatorily—but then his mind was wandering: at moments into the future "One... more... step...!"

"I can go... no further," said Cayke the cook, who also knew her lines. "You must go on without me."

The frog omitted to hop again and turned his heavy head to look at his companion. "Oh, no," he sighed, "I won't do that... We must struggle on together."

After two more feeble leaps, "It's strange," gasped the Frogman. "I had no idea the area east of our mountain—well, west—was... so very much ... like a desert."

"*'Like a desert'*," Cayke still had spark enough to echo ironically. "This is... a desert."

The frog was too exhausted to register his dismay. But his great eyes drooped to the ground—and opened wider. The woman was not crazy. The sands over which they plodded were by no means any longer orange. They were not even yellow—or sand-colored. They were white.

The frog himself went-white: as white as a yellow—well, chartreuse—frog can go. There were no white sands in Oz! What small deserts there were shared the dominant hue of the country they lay in, as the blue desert of Mudge or the yellow sands

of Samandra. If these sands were white then they had strayed out upon the Great (not to say, Deadly) Desert.

Yipe. In moments they would be disintegrated. And yet...they had already been for moments — or more — upon the white sands and they were not yet disintegrated. Then the Frogman, tired and dehydrated as he was, recalled that after all the deserts surrounding Oz were not all *that* deadly. There was the legend which had entered all the history books about the confrontation of the good and bad witches the first time Princess Ozma had been disenchanting. That had taken place on desert sands just outside the borders of Oz and none of the personages involved had remarked on physical discomfort, let alone disintegration, during their stay in the wilderness.

He breathed a little easier but not much. No wonder they were such a long time in getting to the Castle of Light! Admittedly they had not glimpsed the castle since sunup but the frog had kept faithfully to the directions he had set for them in advance: north by northwest.

Like those resident in the Palace of Magic in the Emerald City he had been relieved to find that the sun still came up in the east. Also, through it all, north remained north. He drew out his pocket compass.

The needle still wavered sensitively at the top of the dial. And they were still trudging faithfully a few degrees to the left (that is, what had once been right) of north. How could they have gone wrong?

As it happened they were not to be kept long in ignorance. The two sank down on a dune and the frog passed the cook his water bottle. (They had not been totally improvident when setting out thus impromptu on their pilgrimage.) The woman had just raised the container greedily to her lips when a thundering sound was heard: the first sound of any sort, aside from the faint swishing noise of their own steps through the sand, that they had heard all day.

They had actually raised their heads to scan for thunder *clouds* when they saw breast a particularly lofty dune in the distance a

crowd of burnoosed riders. In a swirl of draperies the veiled men drew rein and looked toward our travelers. Then, shouting *The Riffsong*, they spurred their mounts and swept forward.

Down the dune and over the sands they flew. In a blinding swirl of dust they jerked their steeds to a halt beside the cowering Ozites, left off singing, and leapt to the ground. There were eighteen of them. "Hail!" yelled one who appeared to be their leader, then without waiting for any answer ran to Cayke, threw a billowing serape over her, lifted her up in one bold swooping gesture, and flung her across the back of his horse. (Though there were no horses, except saw-, in Oz in those days, there were plenty elsewhere.)

Cayke had no time to utter a syllable but the Frogman yelped "Help!" feebly as seven strong men wrestled him to the ground (where he was already). A mundane rope, no elegant serape, was used to inhibit, in a twinkling, his movements, and then he too was hoisted aboard a horse. With coarse oaths and ribaldry the brigands wheeled their animals and galloped off. Upside-down as he was, the Frogman still had the use of his eyes and great was his amazement when amidst the sun-blinding white that jounced down and up all about him he presently descried sparkling green heavenly color! in the waterless waste. Well might the Spanish poet one day cry, "Green! green! I love you, green!"

On pounded the corsair crew until they reined up within the perimeter of the oasis, where the two captives were unceremoniously dumped on the ground. After the first greeting, if so it might be called, not a word had been addressed to the frightened pair, but now the leader, still a-mount, paused dramatically, pulled down the concealing scarf from his face, and uttered "That way!" as he pointed off into what, to judge by the sun, was the east.

His brilliant eyes flashed, his brilliant teeth gleamed in one wolfish leer, then the veil was abruptly thrust in place again, the muscular brown hand flew high in signal to his men, and the whole horde wheeled and galloped away into the shimmering

heat of the desert.

"Oh!" cried Cayke, unwrapping her head from the serape which still enfolded her form. "Was that a sheik?!"

"It may well be," grunted the frog, struggling to undo himself from his bonds. "I wonder... would you mind awfully...?"

But Cayke had no mind for mundane matters. "Wasn't he *romantic!!*" she gushed.

The one glimpse she had had of the bedouin's bright eye before he ravished her away (in sense number one of the dictionary) made an impression she was never to forget.

Her question was rhetorical but the Frogman, immobilized as he was, had leisure to ponder it and reply. "Was he? I hardly noticed. His companions, however, I observed to be most skilful with knots. Do you suppose they might be sailors?..." but one further glance across the white wastes dispelled that fancy."Now then, my dear Cake if you *could* inconvenience yourself...?!"

By now the frog had both flippers free but they availed him nothing in his struggle with the rope. Yet the moment the cookie cook applied her hand to the knotty problem, the tangle fell away between her fingers, the rope slumped loosely to the ground—and shrank away to three feet, six inches long!

The Frogman rose up, feeling fully fit again, and he and the cookie cook stared at each other across the coppery-gleaming rope. "Now what do you make of that?" said he in some awe. "Magic again, I'll be bound! or rather, no! I won't be bound! But I think I will just hold onto this rope." Saying so, the frog looped the length of plaiting about his shoulder.

The couple now took the opportunity to look around them. A cool blue-green path led away among towering date palms which, agitated by the desert breeze which here, however, blew coolly, obligingly sprinkled their fruits down upon the two wanderers. Cayke and her companion were not slow to gather up some of the chewy delicacies and stuff their mouths and pockets with them.

Soon they came to the first of a number of cool green lotus

pools and the Frogman, with a scant "Excuse me, my dear!" leapt with a mighty leap incontinently into the middle of it. His tattered finery could look no more bedraggled than it did already and, indeed, might afterwards appear actually fresher for the rinsing.

A duck and a splash, a few mighty pushes of the great hind legs through the water, and then the frog was fresh as home-made and crawled upon the bank ready for anything. "Aren't you hot?" he cried in surprise to see his companion sitting on the shore still closely wrapped round in the black-and-beige blanket her kidnapper had placed there.

Cayke shook her head. "No," she said; "you see, *he* put it round me. I won't have it off again."

"Good gracious," said the Frogman. "You *have* got it bad."

He gave the woman a long and searching look as he squatted beside her. He himself entertained no romantic fancies concerning the female participant in his adventures. He was after all a *frog* (he didn't *think* he was a prince under an enchantment!) and it would have been against nature to desire a *human* mate. But he could see that Cayke was not a bad-looking woman. She might well have attracted a gentleman's eye—or, as in the present case, been herself attracted by—well, scarcely a gentleman.

It was with something more of fellow-sympathy and gentleness that he presently assisted her to her feet and they moved on. "But just the same," he enquired, "isn't it awfully warm inside the—er, shawl?"

"No, that's the wonderful part." Cayke sighed with satisfaction. "It's so lovely and cool. I feel I don't need another thing while I keep it close about me. Have you noticed?; I haven't even wanted to drink again."

It was quite true. The frog himself, of course, had drunk voluptuously while he was in the pool.

They made their way on—through charming tropical alleys where every prospect pleased, Here were irrigated vegetable patches, there a grove of lemon trees, then a tiny village where

shy brown urchins looked at them with sidelong glances, then ventured to thrust out dusky palms and beg for baksheesh. Coming from Oz, however, the travelers had none to give them.

The signs of habitation were left behind, they entered a veritable little jungle of palms and tamarinds, and once beyond it could see the desert again, while close beside them was a dusty corral where discontented-looking camels crouched on the ground and chewed the cud.

As they passed alongside the enclosure, "I wish we had a couple of those ships of the desert to help us on our way" escaped the Frogman.

To their astonishment a voice replied, "I doubt if it would do you much good," and a dromedary more disgruntled-looking than the general run turned a jaundiced eye upon he passers-by.

"Oh, it might be rather nice," disagreed other, more genial, Bactrian camel that opened sleepy eyes and smiled benignly in the direction of the frog and the cookie cook .

"Did you speak?" enquired the frog politely.

"Of course," answered the dromedary. "*You're* speaking, aren't you? Why shouldn't we? "

"Oh, but I'm from Oz," explained the Frogman. "It's normal there for other-than-humans to speak."

"So are we," uttered the dromedary with a sniff of obviousness.

"Are you indeed?" cried the frog, stopping to stare.

"But, er—may I ask what brings you here?"

"Even we," said the dromedary-with-a-grievance, "like to be with our own kind now and then." Blandly it gazed out over the herd of silent, grumpily ruminant animals.

"Er—yes, of course," the frog hastened to agree,

"There are no other camels in Oz - that I ever heard of." The dromedary looked at his placidly chewing compatriote for confirmation.

"That's right, my dear."

The Frogman, feeling fresh and vigorous since his plunge,

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was in his normal disputatious mood. "Pardon me," he now ventured, "but, strictly speaking, your friend isn't a camel, is he? I mean, he's got two humps.

"So? You think perhaps she should have three?

"Oh, no, but a two-humped camel is called a 'dromedary', isn't he?—*not* a 'camel'."

"Oh, dear, that's a *very* vulgar misconception," snorted the dromedary. "A two-humped camel is by very definition not a dromedary. It's called a 'Bactrian' camel—though who or where 'Bacter' was I've no idea. Conversely, *by* definition, a dromedary is a light fleet Arabian-type *one*-humped camel. The ones on the cigarette packets, you know." The dromedary polished its hoof on its lapel. "I'm *very* fleet," he added.

"Hm," sighed the Frogman, grateful for the information but even more bemused by the thought of such a fleet creature under him to speed the weary miles that loomed before him and the cookie cook.

The comfortable-looking camel now put in a word. "I say, Med, these people were hinting they could use a ride. Isn't it time we were moving on ourselves?"

The dromedary turned a sceptical eye on his mate. "Well, if *you* say so: of course. Which will you have? The woman? I suppose so; you're more comfortable. I'll carry the frog fellow. We can argue as we go along."

The Frogman could not keep from leaping in delight. But so far Cayke had said nothing, standing beside her frog companion outside the enclosure and humming "Poor Butterfly". Now she spoke.

"Oh, dear, must we leave?"

"Of course," croaked the frog in surprise. "We must get on, and find out what made our directions go west—or wherever they did go. Why, what did you ...?" he trailed off, puzzled.

"I was just thinking; if I were to stay here, I might, one day... see—*him* again."

"Oh, my dear Cayke, this is most alarming," blurted the frog, upset as everyone is when any new element changes an

acquaintance's life, no matter how lackluster that life has been before. He enumerated all the reasons why she should not stay at the oasis but should follow him to the Castle of Light.

"Very well," complied Cayke reluctantly, as she let herself be hoisted up between the two humps of the camel. Then she said, like Manon, "You'll be sorry." Perhaps what she meant was that *she'd* be sorry.

C H A P T E R

T W E L V E

It seemed that Princess Ozma could not tear herself away from the windows of the music room. Something about that golden dawn held her enthralled. "It's... as if it were *meant* to be," she murmured to herself.

The others were all on the other side of the room holding a conference about what to do next. They were convinced they ought to do *something* but there was a general feeling that this situation was bigger than all of them.

The Cowardly Lion had rejoined the group after going off in the course of the night to sleep in the gueststalls. Professor Wogglebug was there too and with him a young student in charge of a wheelbarrow full of books of mathematics, physics, cartography, and astronomy. There, surely, was to be found all the orthodox information that could help them in the present emergency. The only trouble was that the emergency was so *unorthodox*.

"Well, I think we ought to go see Glinda about it," declared Dorothy. "She'll know what to do. Or if she can't advise us about what's likely to happen at least she can tell us what *did* happen. It'll all be there in the Great Book of Records. There might well be clues as to what caused it."

No one really had any better suggestion and after kicking

the idea around for a while they all agreed to it. Then they came to tell their Queen what they had decided. Ozma was still gazing out the window. And as she watched there came, she thought, a change. Had the sun gone behind a cloud? Things didn't look any more so golden as they had done. But no, not a cloud was to be seen in the sky. Nor was the sun.

That was distinctly odd. Ozma jumped up just as Dorothy and Betsy reached her side. "More mysteries, I'm afraid, darlings," she reported quietly. "I'm afraid I've mislaid the sun. I had it here just a minute ago."

Dorothy pouted. "Your Highness, do be sensible. Whatever do you mean?"

A trill of laughter escaped the queen. "It's quite true. How long have we been here? Forty-five minutes. The sun should be just high in the eastern sky—but it isn't."

Betsy had been more pragmatic. She didn't stop to argue but craned her neck out the window and peered everywhere. "Why, there it is!" she exclaimed and pointed south along the outer wall of the palace toward high noon. Then a frown troubled her brow and she put her watch to her ear.

"Eight-fourteen," said the watch.

"Oh, fiddlesticks!" she cried. "The sun can't be *there* at 8:14."

Now Ozma was staring out the window again. "Correct me if I'm wrong, my dears, but aren't the suburbs of the capital growing by leaps and bounds? Look!"

The Wogglebug was among those who heard her and he quoted from memory; "Following the modern trend to urbanization the outskirts of metropolitan Emerald City have been attracting new residents at the rate of six a year—"

"No, no," interrupted the queen, "I don't mean people-wise. Look! it's green as far as the eye can see. Admittedly rather a pale green. But remember?: just a little while ago it was all gloriously yellow out to the skyline.

"Let me see!" Princess Dorothy took charge and pushed through the little crowd at the window. "'Green'? I'd say it's peacock or turquoise, if anything—!"

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Betsy confirmed: “Yes, there do seem to be aquamarine overtones.”

Scraps put in her two cents’ worth:

“They used to call *me* ‘Patchwork Girl’

Because I was so pied.

But I’ve got nothing on a place

That’s yellow-blue outside.”

It was the fateful word “blue” that filled them all with a wild surmise. The sun had now gone quite out of sight round the side of the palace and all the shadows on the lawn beneath the windows were at a *very* queer angle, considering it to be morning.

Suddenly, like a flock of starlings, all the courtiers and their girl ruler were seized with one impulse and they bolted from the room and galloped through the palace again, along the broad west-east corridor, through presence chambers and anterooms. Then in the confusion—and there was plenty of it—Ozma in the lead (who ought to have known better) took a wrong turning and in a moment the flying column found itself brought up against a blank wall. They retraced their steps part-way, but got worst lost than ever.

Unfortunately the wizard, Oz Diggs, in his designing days had laid out the Palace of Magic exactly symmetrically. Standing in the center of the building you had halls and rooms on either hand which were all mirror images of their counterparts on the complementary side of the palace. Now if your directions, as now, were suddenly set at naught, there was simply no way, inside the palace, to know whether you were going left or right.

They blundered about—and then young Trot pointed out a stairway they had overlooked before. “Isn’t that the way to your tower, Wizard?” she asked.

“You know, I think you’re right,” sighed the genial sorcerer in relief. “I recognize that putto on the banister head.”

Then off they went again! up, up, the ninety-five steps to the blue door, which they flung open—to find everything also blue

within. Not because the Wizard had had it decorated that way but just because the morning sun, shining in across so many miles of Munchkin landscape, brought blue with it.

Ozma sat right down on a footstool and cried. Now it became evident to all why she had taken no active part in the deliberations aimed at curing the crossed directions of the land. "Oh. I'm so disappointed," she wept—but nothing loud and vulgar, of course. "I thought it was so wonderful with the east all golden—and so... right, somehow. After all, they do speak of 'the golden dawn' but of 'the blue of evening'..."

"That's right," Dorothy, the conservative, was constrained to admit. "I never heard anybody talk about 'the blue dawn'."

"But there is 'the golden afternoon'," put in Trot, still remembering *Alice*.

"You're right, dear;" and Ozma squeezed Trot's hand. "But just the same..."

The others tended to be sanguine about the matter. "So we needn't rush off to the Good Sorceress after all," spoke Oz Diggs with a certain amount of satisfaction at not having to own himself stumped or to call in a more capable colleague. "Just the same, I'd like to know what that was all about—and whether we need fear a repetition."

Ozma rose to her feet—and was a Queen again.

"You're right of course, Wizard. The matter should be got to the bottom of - and whoever was responsible—er, punished." The little fairy never really relished punishing anybody.

"I think the best thing I can do will be to continue my astronomical observations," pursued the Wizard.

"Oh, yes, there *was* that—'tea-tray in the sky'," recalled the fairy princess. "You think then that that apparition may have had something to do with it?"

"There's hardly a doubt of it, I should say," affirmed the savant.

That same evening at dinner the Wizard of Oz was able to announce that all indications were that the mysterious "tray" had flown on around behind the moon. "If the object was some-

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how connected with the curious manifestations we observed, certainly our fellow planet would interpose a very effective shield against its workings.”

A glance out the window would have informed anyone who cared to look that the moon, indeed, was no longer blue.

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

“Hot ziggety!” cried Till Orangespiegel and spun around on one toe in glee. “It works!!” Then he rushed to one of the opened windows and flung his upper body across the sill to peer at the ground below. Did his eyes deceive him? or was not the dusty earth beyond the moat a fine cinnabar hue?

Yes, surely! Even now waves of increasing orangeness flooded out from the point where he could see Levimeyerabloch aiming the little hand mirror at the sky. But the fool! Why was he swinging it back and forth in that way?! Couldn’t he see the ‘satellite’ he was supposed to be training it on? Till squinted at the sky. Well, no, it *couldn’t* be seen any longer, certainly not by the naked eye. Maybe that was Oy’s idea of aiming it at the ‘zenith’! Maybe he didn’t know where the zenith was either..?!

In a fury Orangespiegel dashed down the spiral stairway, not waiting any longer than Button Bright had done for the lift. “Idiot! ” he fumed as he ran; “and scoundrel!” What if Lev were doing it on purpose? Certainly he would break up the magic vibrations if he kept that up!

He clattered across the central hall in his wooden shoes and out upon the drawbridge. “Oy, Gewalt!” he yelled as he ran. “No, I mean ‘Gewalt!, Oy!’; mit aller Gewalt, stop that!!”

Wondering, the peddler paused in his pendulating. At least

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he did not drop his hand but held it, by a special effort, fairly steady-aimed against the sky. The pulsating of the orange wave of color slowed down and stopped and the hue seemed to flow in a smooth thick sweep. Soon all Oz would be orange—according to the Owl Practitioner's calculations—and he hugged his sides.

His impulse was to grab the mirror and direct it himself. But no, that would never do. It must be held by "Oy". But in his frustration he yelled, "What's the matter; aren't you normal?! Can't you hold the thing still? just aim it straight up?!"

Levimeyerabloch's boiling point was high but even so *his* impulse was to dash the mirror to the ground. From the word Go there was something very shady about this whole affair, and then to receive a tongue-lashing to boot! It was not to be borne. The possibility was not ruled out that he had already performed as an accomplice to high crimes and misdemeanors. These waves of color that were shooting over the ground! That wasn't normal for a start. Oz was being turned a whole different hue!

And the O.P.'s intrusion without so much as a by-your-leave into the sanctum of the dread Lords of Light! For that alone they would probably end up doing time. The peddler experienced the gravest qualms, and wished himself anywhere but where he was.

Button Bright and the animals were taking it more calmly. Nothing ever ruffled the Sawhorse's composure, or if it did you could hardly tell, so impassive was he. The good-natured Woozy was gruzzing in a clump of tamarisks and feeling no pain. The Charming Cheetah was nowhere to be seen. And Master Bright was enjoying the color display, which he interpreted as an extension of the 'fireworks' show he had taken part in in the castle tower—which of course it was. He had told something: the inessentials—of his experience there to the peddler but so inconclusive was his account that Lev could not make out what had really taken place.

Whatever it was seemed to be to the Owl Practitioner's taste. He had resumed dancing his jig and the satisfaction he obvi-

ously felt was reflected in a mildening of his manner. "Sorry, old man!" he exclaimed, almost really contritely. "You know I'm a bit of a tease. I apologize for my gruffness but I hated anything to go wrong. It's a—er, birthday treat I'm planning for my old pals, the Lords. Old Aunt Luce's birthday is tomorrow—and won't the family be pleased when they come home and find their property all done over in the most beautiful color in the world?!"

There was no doubt of the done-overness. The wave of orangety had swept not only over the ground but also crept up the walls of the once golden castle and rendered it, in the dusky light of late sunset, a sanguineous tangerine. Till folded his arms, leaned back, and stared at it in delighted fascination.

Then with a slapping brushing 'that's-that' gesture of hands he turned and said brightly, "Well, shall we be trotting home again?" And answer came there some: every one was pleased to quit the role of uninvited guest and with murmurs of content they moved with one accord toward the dray.

His duty with the hand mirror was apparently done then and Levimeyerabloch handed it to its owner and yoohooed up the cheetah, who emerged from a thicket of mock-orange, looking unsatisfied. No gazelles there, it would seem. But now, with the heavy ('middle') mirror removed, there was no need for the sprightly creature to enter the traces. He and the Woozy leapt (or were lifted) into the back of the dray. The oxen and Sawhorse could cope on their own between the shafts.

Away then into the falling night. At first all went well. After their exertions, greater or lesser, the three humans took turns at short sitting naps. But then when nine o'clock (or thereabouts) came they thought they'd like to arrive home again at the spherodome, where Mistress Pill no doubt was keeping a nice supper warm for them. Her brother even mentioned something about a caneton à l'orange he had requested be prepared.

But where were they? The moon had not yet risen and none of them were sufficiently accomplished mariners to navigate by the stars. The featureless landscape would have told them little

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even if they could have made it out. There was nothing for it but to keep rumbling forward by instinct. Stopping and standing, they all agreed, could avail them nought.

In an idle gesture (for knowing the time would not be germane to finding their way) Lev struck a match and looked at his watch.

Was he losing his mind? The watch face was backwards.

C H A P T E R F O U R T E E N

Fast was the dreary season of wandering redeless in the desert. The frog and the cookie cook gave them their heads and the two camels lurched rapidly across the burning sands. Having no watches or clocks to bother them, the quadrupeds had never realized that directions were reversed, nor that now they had been unreversed. They just headed for where they knew Oz to lie and their riders let them lurch.

It was still only just past noon but a mad time to be out in the sun, especially for a frog in the desert. Cayke was cool in her serape but the Frogman's eyes were starting out of his head in parched distress as he scanned the horizon for any sign of another oasis. Even a mirage would be better than nothing. Thus it was that he was first to descry orangeness in the distance.

Orange?! What could that be? The Frogman suspected a figment of his fevered brain. But no, the swift plodding of their beasts brought them every moment nearer to what could only be described as an orange landscape. Well, it wasn't Oz, that was for sure. That there was no orange country in the magic land was one piece of information the Frogman had picked up during his season at the capital.

No matter. The land ahead was not desert and that was so much to the good. There would be plant life there—and water!

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Already the Frogman could make out orange trees — with apples hanging from them.

But there was something more. Just a little to the left—yes, that definitely *was* left—the land was yellow, and that realization was a greater satisfaction to the Frogman than even the sighting of non-desert had been. It must be the land of the Winkie's, and so they were back at square one.

The camels hurried on, crossed out of the zone of blinding sands, and came soon to an orange grove of coconut palms. At least: it wasn't all orange. The trees farther on were clearly yellow. Pretty but puzzling. They pressed forward.

And now they heard voices. Yes, any number of them, and apparently quarreling at the top of their bent. The two camels came round a thicket of tamaracks and brought their riders within view of a very queer crew. In or out of a clumsy old wagon painted bright orange (with powder-blue arabesques) were standing or sitting two men and a boy, two oxen and a cheetah, and a couple of artificial animals which by rights ought not to have been talking—or even living.

"Lily pads and lotus!" gasped the parched and panting Frogman. "It isn't—? it isn't—! Yes, it is! the Sawhorse of Oz! and the equally famous Woozy!" Then, physically and emotionally over-exposed, he fainted, sliding down off the dromedary with a rush and a sqwush.

The (to those already there) equally startling irruption of the camel travelers proved a diversion which the giant frog's fainting 'fit immediately reinforced. They turned as one to stare and then to begin to make their way toward them.

"Hi, Froggers! " called Button Bright, who was never put out of countenance by any surprising thing that happened. As they made their way toward the newcomers he explained to Levimeyerabloch, "That's the Frogman."

"So I see," said Lev, who had his own recollections of the curious individuals to be met with at various times at the Emerald City.

To Till Orangespiegel it was all new, however, and he

hurried forward outstripping the others. "Tsck-tsck," he tacked, "what's the matter? Is your friend ill?" he called to the black-and-beige-clad woman who sat ensconced between the two humps of her camel and looked distressed.

"He's been suffering from the sun - and thirst," she explained — where another might have said "dehydration".

"Aha! water!" cried Till sagely. It was left, however, to Button Bright to duck out of sight to a water hole he had noticed a little way back. He was gone an inordinate length of time. When Levimeyerabloch eventually went to find him the lad was discovered sitting on a fallen palm log, idly stirring the muddy water of the sink-hole with a stick.

"Stop that," said the peddler and flung his bandanna into the pool to moisten it. "I thought you were coming after water."

"I was," confirmed the boy and pointed to his straw hat that lay bottom-side up on the bank, full of the holes he had providently poked there.

"Never mind. Come back," ordered Lev. They returned to the knot of people under the coconut trees, who seemed, under pressure of the emergency, to have got more or less acquainted.

Cayke had selflessly taken off her shawl to spread over her fallen companion and its curious cooling action was rapidly restoring the frog to a semblance of normality. When he was ambulatory the peddler and Till Orangespiegel each took an elbow and helped him to the water hole, into which the Frogman subsided, rear first, and soon he was chipper again.

The travelers by dray now had leisure to take up their quarrel again and they were soon going it hot and heavy. "They've been at it for hours," Button Bright revealed in an aside to the cookie cook. However he left her to decide for herself just *what* the merchant and the Owl Practitioner were disputing about.

The crux of the matter-was this: Till Orangespiegel was cross as could be because the entire country was not orange, and Levimeyerabloch was indignant and feeling betrayed because any of it was.

"It's not like I planned!" cried Till for the manyeth time and

stamped his foot. "What went wrong?! All my calculations were done with precision down to the minus-ninth degree. The entire country should be a rich and glowing sun-color by now! Oh, shut up!" he yelled at Lev the peddler, who was contending that none of Oz should be orange—it never had been and hence never ought to be.

The revived frog took a sudden sharp interest. "Tell me," he interposed, resting his elbows on the rim of the water hole, "do you come from the Castle of Light?" he asked with rapt attention.

The disputants stopped in their wrangle and stared. "Why—er, yes—in a sense. What makes you ask that?"

Then the Frogman related in detail his experience of—could it be only?—the afternoon before. "Suddenly everything went orange!" he recalled, "like waves of color welling out from the castle as center. It was so strange and unaccountable a phenomenon that I at once resolved to set out and discover what its origin was. That's why we chance to be here, in fact."

"Hurrah!, hurrah!" shrieked the Owl Practitioner. "So it could be seen from Mount Yip?! It *was* working!... But what went wrong?" he reiterated. "Why aren't *all* these trees orange?—not just half. See there!" and he pointed to a yellow palm just north of the water hole. "What made it stop?... Tell me, Mr. Frog —"

"'Fruakx' is the name," inserted the frog, "'Frederick Fruakx'—though most often I as called simply 'the Frogman'." For some reason this information brought a chortle of surprise and satisfaction from the boy Button. The others stared, just slightly.

"Mr. Fruakx then," pursued the O.P. "did you see that—er, color wave stop? I mean; it didn't keep on expanding outward (as it should have done!)"

"Oh, I didn't stop to watch," said the frog. "You see, something else queer happened at just the same time, something that disoriented me completely and quite put the matter of the color-wave out of my mind."

"And what was that?"

"Well, you see, suddenly everything was back to front—or, I

should say, left to right—and vice-versa. For a season I didn't know whether I was coming on or going—"

"There, you see!" cried Levimeyerabloch in triumph. "Directions were reversed! This is independent testimony!"

"You're crazy," stated the practitioner bluntly. In fact this had been the peddler's own immediate assessment of his case the night before but when he had showed his watch to Orangespiegel and the latter had refused to credit the very evidence of his eyes Lev turned to believing the O.P. was the crazy one.

"How could anything like that happen?" Till had demanded indignantly. "It's unheard of. And besides, it's impossible."

They had argued all night, while the dray blundered on—in who knew which direction? Just before dawn they stopped, by common consent, and flopped in the back of the wagon upon the old mattress and quilted blankets that had served to cushion the 'middle' mirror. There they all remained sleeping till hours after sun-up.

When they started on again in the morning Levimeyerabloch had to admit that perhaps, worn out by the contretemps of the day, he had been hallucinating. His watch presented a normal—and cheerful—face, nor was any other evidence to be observed that right had ever been wrong. He had sat silent on the surrey-seat while Till drove and exulted. But Lev experienced in his turn a little schadenfreude when, on entering an orange coconut grove, they were suddenly brought up short by the sight of a band of lemon(-colored) trees.

Orangespiegel burst into a torrent of fury and abuse, of which the so-called Oy, already in the dog-house, conveniently became the butt. They were disputing violently over who was crazy now when the camel caravan appeared on the scene.

Levimeyerabloch was now clearly coming off the winner. On hearing his report the merchant felt a sudden surge of affection for the—really very imposing and dignified—overgrown frog. "'Crazy' is it?" he rebutted to the O.P. "I'm crazy. Mr. Fruakx is crazy. Madam here I presume is also crazy. But *you're* not crazy...!? So who's crazy?"

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"Tell me it's a lie," Till pleaded of the frog. "Tell me you're making it up!"

"Why, no, I never lie," stated the Frogman gravely. "I can't—even if I should wish to." And then while he continued to enjoy the coolth of the pool and everyone else sweated and fretted, he related at length how, in another world far away, he had fallen, or been pushed, into the Truth Pond^s and thenceforth was forever prevented from telling a fib.

"So you see," crowed the peddler. "I wasn't insane! Things *were* switched around." He stopped his unbecoming self-justification in the sudden grip of interest in the ramifications of the phenomenon: "Tell me:" he entreated of the Frogman, "how did you know things were reversed?"

"Well, let me see." The frog pondered. "First I couldn't find my way: Mistress Cayke's cottage which I intended to visit had always stood in the west of our village but when I got there I found the duffel-grinder's shop in its place. *That* had always been in the east—"

Lev broke in: "There was no mix-up between north and south? that you could see." He was beginning to have shrewd suspicions. "Why, no," said the frog, surprised. "That never occurred to me. North and south have seemed to remain in their traditional orientation. This new switch was only a mirror image—"

"A-ha!" shouted the peddler with sudden conviction—and a lovely feeling of self-righteousness. "This is all *your* doing!" He pointed the accusing finger at his erstwhile host and client Till Orangespiegel. "It was all your mumbo-jumbo with mirrors brought this about! You've bewitched the whole countryside. Heaven knows how far the havoc may reach!"

"*Reached*," was all the failed practitioner could summon up of words to defend himself with. He was feeling properly cowed.

He had been forcibly, tangibly, brought to face the fact of the ruin of his true enterprise, the orangification of all Oz. Now it seemed that, contrariwise, he had wrought mischief infinitely

§ See *The Lost Princess of Oz*. Editor's note.

more widespread (though luckily perhaps only temporary) than a mere rehuing of the country. Because of what had happened (if it were *not* temporary) the entire nation would be up in arms and he the scapegoat of the people's fury. That was enough to give pause to even such an egoist as Till Orangespiegel. His only loophole did seem to be the fact that for the time being the reversal effect appeared to have waned.

"Reached," he repeated subduedly. "It's not doing it any more."

"But just what was it you did?" asked the Frogman, in his eagerness hauling himself out of the water hole. This was after all what he had come all this way to find out.

"Nothing," averred the O.P., even now trying to own as little as possible of his guilt. "A little trick with mirrors. We're known in our family for our way with tricks—and treats. This was to be a birthday treat for old Lady Luce at the Castle. It's not a permanent effect, as you can see—" Strictly speaking, nobody could see that the new orangeness wasn't permanent. And since the change of color scheme for the part of Oz affected remains in force to this day they were right in so not seeing.

"But it seems something went a little haywire. I never planned for directions to go topsy-turvy and I still don't admit that I'm responsible. What would I do a thing like that for? What benefit could that be to me?"

No one *could* think of a reason why anyone would want everything to be rear-backwards so they gave him the benefit of the doubt.

"But what did you actually do?" insisted the frog.

Then Till Orangespiegel enjoyed an orgy of confession—which turned out sounding curiously like boasting. Everything seemed now lost in any case. He might as well try to clear his conscience.

"Well, you see," said the O.P., as the others moved toward the plank wagon, then threw down the mattress under a palm and got comfortable to listen to a story, "I manufactured a set of mirrors. In an old book, acquired, actually, from our friend Lev

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here years ago, I had come across a recipe for magicifying glass. I knew already from a lifelong study of looking glasses how they will *almost* exactly reflect the qualities of one another. I reasoned that if I could make one magic mirror, be it never so small, I could increase its range enormously by a simple process of multiple reflection.

"Then the great idea was born. All my life—since moving to Oz—I had been bothered by the fact that of the six rainbow colors all were represented in the warp and woof of the enchanted country save only the very color of the sun—and of those little suns, the fruit called oranges. Devoted as I was, virtually from birth, to the color, I determined to do something about it. What a coup if I could bewitch all Oz to be orange!

"I will not weary you with a technical account. My encyclopedias and books of cabals described the method to be followed exactly. There seemed no way anything could go wrong—"

"Oh, come, sir!" cried the Frogman, going to be disappointed. "A *little* technical description I'm sure we can all put up with. What *was* your method?"

The Owl Practitioner appeared not to sit quite comfortably on the lumpy torn old mattress. He reached behind him and seemed to do some rearranging of the lumps where he sat propped against the sloping bole of the coconut tree. Then he resumed, "Well, if you *will* know...: I possessed some odd items of magic already. I never properly went in for the art but the occasional object with magical properties would come my way in the course of my wide-ranging studies and dealings in physics and optics.

Now that I found such were of the essence I ordered up further charms from my friend Oy—who also was wanted to play another role in my scheme..."

Levimeyerabloch fumed again to think he had been cold-bloodedly summoned across half Oz to "play roles" in a "scheme". But Orangespiegel went unperturbably on, pausing occasionally to ruffle his feathered /81 head or blink his owlish eyes. "I turned over the whole of my glass manufactory which

normally was kept busy with the production of mirrors for side-shows and conference halls—to the preparation of three looking glasses of the very finest quality.

“One was the great rectangular installation which some of you have glimpsed in its bed at the edge of the then Quadling country—”

“‘Then!’” quoth the Frogman in some consternation.

“Why, yes,” replied the O.P. smoothly, “the Quadling land of Oz is by definition red in color”—he made a moue of distaste—“but my mirror lies now in a region of the true hue. I think it may be assumed it no longer forms a part of Quadlinga, and indeed may be thought of as an independent realm—”

“With you as king, I suppose,” put in Levimeyerabloch acidly.

“If I should be?! I’d rather be a peddler!—Oh, sorry, old thing. But nay, far be it from my heart, the thought thereof.”

But just the same, they all thought he protested a bit too much and withal too Shakespeareanly.

The Frogman was more interested in physics than in power politics and went on to insist that they be told the purpose of the giant mirror.

“The rays of the evening sun,” complied Orangespiegel, “at the autumnal equinox—that was yesterday—striking through my great pane of orange-tinted glass, fall at a certain hour exactly athwart the vast oblong of the ground-based mirror. Then, if another mirror, keyed to the greater one, were hung in space, and the whole activated by yet a third—magic—mirror, why, then I calculated the color of the great earth mirror would leap into space, whence the satellite glass would reflect it back over the whole land—like a color transparency—and the magic would fix it there.

“At least, that’s what the handbooks declared...”

The Owl Practitioner ended a little anticlimactically his tale of grandiose dreams that had ultimately got nowhere.

“And then?” pursued the eager Frogman. He had suffered enough in the desert, not to mention at the mouths of the mouth

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spiders, not to be going to get his money's worth of what he had come after. "How did you get the middle mirror into space?"

"Well, that required a bit of subterfuge," confessed the orange ne'er-do-well. "I knew my neighbors, the Lords of Light, had the only satellite launcher in the vicinity. I happened to know they were to be from home yesterday. In fact, I arranged it myself. I caused a fabricated message to be delivered to them, one purporting to come from their—daughter—that's Lucinda Wammuppirovocuck - calling for the attendance of the whole crew of them. I think I fantasized a wedding in which the grandson Zippiochoggolok would be the principal figure..." The O.P. trailed off, seemingly gloating over the success of his prank.

"Anyway," he soon resumed, "I loaded up the would-be satellite mirror and brought it—and us all—to the Castle of Light, where it was a simple matter to launch it into orbit by the use of the Lords' equipment." There he stopped.

"And the magic mirror'?" prompted the frog, "the crux of your whole plan?"

"There too I intended to make use of the Lords. I knew they possessed a more powerful blow-lamp than I happened to have on hand. The process of glass-magicization requires a moment of intense heat applied to the glass and the magic ingredients simultaneously. Master Bright here can tell you how that proceeded—"

Master Bright could but as usual didn't.

"The whole thing went off like a charm - which of course it was." The Owl Practitioner glowed with quiet satisfaction at the recollection. "And then it screwed up! " he wailed—and could not be comforted. "What went wrong?! I did everything by the book, to the minutest detail! How *could* it go wrong?"

He moaned for a while - and then he renewed his quarrel with Levimeyerabloch. "It was this idiot here! It *must* have been! Waving the mirror about in that frantic fashions! I fear I didn't catch him in time. He broke the steady play of the glasses upon each other. He must have set up some kind of oscillation that ultimately undid the whole process—"

"Mr. Oy—Lev—oh, sorry; I' m confused by the wealth of names—" said the Frogman. "Levimeyerabloch, son of Ritzeplummereczech," quoth the peddler, smarting under the uncivil O.P.'s attack but feeling still very cordial toward the courteous frog. "For reasons I shouldn't be knowing, called 'Oy' by mine genial host," he ended, with an indignant glance at Till.

"Thank you," responded the frog with old-world etiquette. Then again to Orangespiegel; "Mr. Levimeyerabloch was set to tend the magic mirror Wasn't that a very weak link in your chain of command? I mean; it's quite understandable; he didn't—by your leave, Mr. Lev—know what he was doing—as I can gather...?"

"No more he did!" raved the incensed O.P. "But it had to be so. That was one of the essentials of the formula as given in my encyclopedia!... Wait!" He fumbled in a pocket. "I have it here about me. I copied down the recipe - for ready reference while at work at the castle."

He drew forth a crumpled piece of paper: his check list of not-to-be-forgottens, across the top of which was scrawled: "Successive reflections in all three mirrors will change all the angles made by O.P. with the normals Ox, Oy, Oz into their supplements^s."

§ *Encyclopædia Britannica*, vol. 15, page 569 which was repeating the formula as still operative as late as 1969. Editor's note.

C H A P T E R

F I F T E E N

“Good gracious me,” cried the pretty Princess Regnant of Oz the next morning, stepping into the orangery. This was a triangular apartment on the ground floor in the southwest corner of the Palace of Magic in the Emerald City. “Whatever’s this?

Ozma had felt like a grapefruit that morning (though scarcely round enough! and by no means so acid) and had stopped off to pluck a few from her potted citrus trees to carry along to the breakfast room. She would, however, be hard put to it now to select any such fruit, at least by color for every grapefruit in the room, as well as every lemon, citron, tangerine, satsuma, pomelo, kumquat, shaddock, calemondin, lime, and tangelo was a bright orange.

“More mysteries!” she murmured to herself and paused for a long—and not wholly displeased—gaze round before going to summon assistance.

It might just be mentioned here that Oz the Wizard when designing a suitable (and symmetrical) Ruler’s Palace for the magical country had harked to that country’s shape and color scheme for his inspiration. The Palace was oblong, lying along an east-west axis, and the rooms in the various parts were decorated in the leit-farbe of the directionally corresponding region

of Oz, with the emerald-green throne room in the center. Until today the ceiling and floor of the orangery had always been yellow — with pink polka dots.

"Heavings!" cried the Wizard jocularly when he had come and seen the extent of the mischief. "I should say the room's under some kind of enchantment. That is: no one sent out in the night for decorators, did they, Ozma?"

"Even if they had, they would scarcely have painted the fruit," rejoined the ruler in an equally light tone.

"They painted the roses in *Alice*," reminded Trot, who had run from the breakfast room with her napkin still in her collar.

"That's so," agreed Ozma. "But Wonderland keeps being different from Oz, doesn't it?"

"You've checked the rooms alongside, Your highness?" wondered the Wizard.

"Quite. Everything normal."

"I still think you ought to go consult Sorceress Glinda," chimed in young Dorothy. "She'll know what's at the bottom of all these mysterious phenomena. She's only to read in the Great Book."

"Which I dare say " put in the Wizard that sorceress' (*very* friendly) rival, "she's already done. If anything's gravely amiss we're sure to hear from her." The wonder-worker still tended to view the unexpected orangeness of a single room as a somewhat laughing matter certainly so in comparison with the general reversal of directions that had exercised all of them yesterday and the evening before.

Queen Ozma was inclined to agree with him—until the observant Princess Betsy, glancing out a southwest window, threw them all into a commotion with her announcement:

"It's not just this room, Ozma. look there!" From under the tall orangehouse windows a broad band of total orangeness stretched away across lawn and garden and park, over the park walls and the streets of the Emerald City, and far far away, could they have but known it, to a certain arrangement of vertical and horizontal glasses on the edge of the Deadly Desert. Within that

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zone everything was oranger than objects in the Emerald City normally were green.

"Oh, my word, what a sight!" cried the fairy ruler and clapped her hands. "Isn't it wonderful just there where the green *meets* the orange?! I love that combination."

Ozma was not employing the grave tone Princess Dorothy would have considered suitable and she chided her chum gently, if only by implication, when she said, "Now I really do think we—that is, you—ought to go confer with Glinda."

The queen gave a faint sigh. "Very well, my dears. I'll just finish my grapefruit. Then we'll go to determine who they shall be that straight shall post to Glinda... But"—a sudden thought struck her: "how shall we get there?! Lignum's gone off gallivanting with the Woozy! There's no one to draw the red wagon—"

"Your grace!" broke in the Wizard, who had turned for a last puzzled look out the orange window. "All in good time here comes the sweating horse—"

I doubt that any sweat was coming from the speeding log horse but certainly gravel was flying from his twinkling hoofs as he turned in through the park gate and rushed headlong toward the terrace before the palace. In moments they could all hear a drumming, even at that distance, on the front door and the crowd in the orangery sped off to welcome home the errant Sawhorse.

The Soldier with the Green Whiskers had already done the honors at the door as they arrived. "My dear friend!" cried Princess Ozma and impulsively stooped to throw her arms about the neck of her own wooden creation. "Where have you been?!" she wondered, while the others chimed in with marveling comments on the aptness of the Sawhorse's coming.

"Oh, Your highness!" gasped the wooden animal—and then, as so often, was at a loss for words.

"Yes, dear Lignum? Go on," urged the Ruler kindly, as everyone waited, stilt, to hear the news.

But it was no good. The Sawhorse couldn't say a word.

Finally Ozma had to go with him out to the stables and there, when the faithful creature had calmed down, the fairy princess got the whole story from him.

She returned after forty-five minutes to the Small Presence Chamber where, by common consent, the others had waited. Her eyes were dark with tragedy. "Oh, my dears," she spoke in thrilling accents, "I'm afraid matters have taken a very bad turn indeed!"

C H A P T E R

S I X T E E N

“Fascinating!” breathed Glinda the Good, right royal Sorceress and Good Witch of the South, as she read of things she had never believed possible. She was all alone in the immense book-lined library and study of her pink palace on the outskirts of the Ruby City, capital of the Quadling country of Oz, and it was midnight. She sat on a high stool before the heavy old lectern upon which was chained with links of silver, bronze, and platinum the ancient Book of Records, which contained a succinct account of virtually everything that happened in Oz since the year One, O.Z.—as well as a digest of important foreign news. (Naturally the Book had not the space—nor the patience—to record every time in Oz that a farmer went out to milk the cows.)

Glinda read on with bated breath: “Thereupon peddler, frog, woozy, and boy departed for Pink Palace...”

“Oh, good,” the witch said to herself with satisfaction; “they’ll be here directly then.” She knew of old the swiftness of the cheetah. She rang through on the intercom to the gatehouse at the entrance to the grounds. “Hello, Jinjur? Glinda here. Say, is Minute Maid there? I heard you girls were having a pyjama party... Right. Will you send her right over?—Yes, just tell her to brew up a heaping jug of Skim and bring it to the library. Oh,

and a plate of bagels wouldn't hurt... Yes, thanks. I've taken a few tucks under the arm-holes. I think it'll do very well now... Oh, and, Jinjur, there'll be a buggy arriving — at the latest, before dawn, I should judge. It's my friend Levimeyerabloch and party. Just send them on through, okay?"

The Sorceress rang off and jotted on a memo pad; "also flies bees —"

"'Boy'," she murmured; "that'll be Button Bright," and she added "ice cream, popcorn" to the list.

She sat musing a moment. A likely youth. She herself liked non-gabbiness in a person. There was something quirky, off-beat — and attractive! there. But what the heck! the kid was only ten years old — and, if he were to stay on in Oz, unlikely ever to get any older. Besides, he hadn't addressed word one to herself on his recent visit. She dismissed the topic from her mind.

The sorceress leaned back for just a moment on her (after all high-backed) stool — and fell into a light doze, to be wakened in a quarter of an hour by a discreet tap at the door. "Oh, fine, she said, stifling a wee yawn. "Just put it there, will you?" She handed the girl in gingham dress and apron the supplementary list. "And when those people arrive, also these things, all right?"

'Fancy that,' mused the witch when alone again. 'So the old rascal brought off something after all with his mirrors. But what a funny way to behave in the end! I wonder how that will sort itself out... I must tell Ozma... I must tell... the Queen...' Soon she was dozing again.

The ersatz in its thermos was still piping hot, however, when she was awakened definitively an hour later by the arrival of the bedraggled crew from points west.

"Come in, do!" welcomed the gracious sorceress. "Or no! I tell you what, let's go along to the morning room on the work-room staircase. You'll be more comfortable there. Here you'd have to sit on stacks of books."

So saying, she herself took up the refreshment tray and held the door open with her foot as the others passed out again.

"Hi, Queen," said Button Bright as he went.

Glinda gave an amused chuckle. "I'm not a queen, my lad. Oh, I know," she explained, as they passed along the corridor. "I live amidst the panoply of royalty—and, indeed, am said to be of partly royal birth" (she knew very well she was). "Also I am ruler of the Quadlings—but *not* their Queen."

"You should be," stated the boy.

Glinda raised her eyebrows—in delight, let it be noted.

In moments they were all comfortably ensconced in easy chairs and the Skim was going round. "Now, please, Lev," entreated the witch, "let me hear the news! I've been keeping up, of course, via the Great Book—but I want to get the personal angle."

"Easy it hasn't been, your grace," admitted the peddler and munched a bagel ravenously. In a space between bites he added, "Such usage I haven't been used to. Look there," and he put down his bun to pull back the sleeve of his caftan and reveal serious black and blue marks. "And here! feel that." He proffered the side of his head, where a large lump protruded among the curls. "A wooden shoe brought that—with a foot in it!"

"Gracious," said Glinda, "I didn't realize there'd been fisticuffs. The Book just said 'dispute'."

"Dispute there was! and then some. But, the worst of it is; I got my clouts to no purpose. They got away!"

"That would be..?"

"Till Orangespiegel, the villainous 'Owl Practitioner', and the woman Cayke—"

"But was she—!?"

"Oh, I have no beef against the Yip woman. Seemed a decent soul, she did. But for her, however—"

"Well, I am agog, Lev," declared Glinda the Good, pleasurablely excited to hear all the gossip, despite the fullness of her existing acquaintance with affairs. But the Record Book was so succinct and matter-of-fact! "Could we have the whole story?" the witch went on, "—from the time you left here before?"

So the merchant collected his heads of discourse and told the tale.

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"I see," said the fascinated Frogman. "'OP' is yourself and of course it was you who set up the angles of reflection. But 'normals': what are they?"

"Just what the word signifies—I presume!" huffed Till Orangespiegel, who appeared to have turned out a more superficial student than he liked to think. "The ox at the great ground mirror—actually, I had two hundred of them, for good measure—was normal enough in every way. And then Oz, represented by the oblong middle mirror, remained as normal as blueberry pie - or as normal as a thoroughly magic land can be—until the very instant when I myself denormalized it. But 'Oy'!—I realize now *he's* never been normal in his life, I dare say!!"

Here the Owl Practitioner jumped to his feet and shocked everyone by heaping the most outrageous abuse on the head of the poor unoffending peddler Levimeyerabloch!

They were all too startled by the gross impropriety to speak—all but the mettlesome merchant himself, who put his hands on his hips and laughed the furious orangeman to scorn. 'Oy, Gewalt!' he cried with spirit. "Freely translated, that's 'Give me strength!'—to resist pounding this pitiful pile of puckered putridity into the ground! 'Oy', indeed! My name's never been 'Oy'—and I have been grossly hoodwinked and manipulated

and my confidence violently abused. This creature hasn't a leg to /93 stand on in defense of his treatment of me—or all of us! as far afield as the great Glinda herself, who likewise was conned—into supplying the oxen!"

Lev was working himself up into a nice little passion of his own and it was only with the greatest difficulty that the others managed to separate the two combatants. The Frogman, followed by his companion the cookie cook, drew the fuming Orangespiegel off among the orange trees to the south, while Lev and his associates Button Bright and the animals retired out of sight to the north

and tried to decide what to do next. The camels remained impassively where they were, cropping the short desert grass.

"Boy, oh boy! the noive of that joik!" raved Levimeyerabloch. "He ought to be taken into custody. Wait 'til her highness Ozma hears about this. Would you believe it?: he was going to refinish her whole country in a different color! without a syllable of warning. Were it not by great preservation we'd *all* be orangemen today. Even so the damage is bad enough." Here the peddler rubbed vigorously the bole of the last orange palm they passed and was rewarded by being able to show a fine orange powder on his own palm.

"See there? It's deep-dyed through and through—and I don't see how it will ever be put right. Oh, Ozma will be furious!"

The rest all looked glum at the prospect but no one had any helpful suggestions to make.

Meanwhile Till Orangespiegel was excitedly justifying himself to the Frogman—while Cayke sat on the ground in her serape and gazed off wistfully across the desert.

"Hm, yes, I see," replied the frog, trying to be sympathetic when appealed to as confidant, but shocked as everyone had been at the O.P.'s bad behavior. His curiosity was by now to some extent slaked and he was wondering what was going to happen next. The Owl Practitioner's machinations had after all been brought to nought—except for a certain orangeness of the immediately surrounding countryside, which after all struck the

frog as not unattractive. Maybe they should just all go home.

Alas, it wasn't going to be that easy. Till was off on a new tack. "I'm not beaten yet!" he boasted in the midst of diatribes. "There's more than one string to my bow! I'll go back to the spherodome. There I'll think of some way to get it all back. After all, tomorrow is another day!"

So saying, he abruptly left his companions and ran to the dray, between whose shafts the two patient oxen waited. Without ceremony Orangespiegel gathered up the awkward loose-flopping mattress from under the palm and fumbled it approximately back into the rear of the wagon. Then he mounted to the driver's seat.

But his adversary, the peddler, was off on a tack of *his* own. At this moment he came running from among the trees to the north and shouted, "Oy, you there! Where's that magic mirror! Give it here to me! I'm taking it to the Queen. We've had enough of your magic muddling!"

This was too much for the incensed orangeman, who stood up with the reins in his hands and yelled, "Stop where you are! I declare you all my prisoners! Mr. Fruakx!" he called to the Frogman, who had followed after to the scene of hubbub, "be so good as to tromp on that peddler. And you, madam—" this to the cookie cook "will you kindly take in hand that boy there?! We're off back to my place—where I shall settle your various hashes as I see fit!"

No one was in a hurry to act on these injunctions. No one except the quiet Sawhorse, who, when he heard the word "prisoners", bolted incontinently. He could never stand being in thrall, unless it be to his kind mistress, the Queen of Oz, who—it was high time—ought to be informed of what mischief was afoot in this corner of her land. The others saw him no more.

Levimeyerabloch was standing with his hands on his hips, looking up at the furious Orangespiegel and taunting him with jibes and laughter. "You! take us as prisoners!? How? I'd like to know. You're an incompetent, a mere dialectician; you couldn't take a fly prisoner!—"

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Actually Lev was treading on problematical ground here. Who knew what the O.P. might not be able to accomplish by means of the magic mirror, which after all he still possessed? But the peddler had a shrewd suspicion that the power of the mirror, though there it might be very great, was limited to its effect upon other mirrors.

But his thrusts had told. With a flying leap of rage the Owl Practitioner launched himself from the high cart seat, wooden clogs first, upon the head of the peddler and the two went down in a swirl of dust and a writhe of warlike arms and legs.

The others all came running and gathered in a ring to watch the fun. None of them took any part but they did tend to hope the peddler would win. Thus when presently Lev cried, "Quick! Throw me a rope!", they were not tardy in complying.

Actually a rope might be an unlikely thing to call for in a coconut grove removed from any human habitation, but no doubt the merchant was thinking of the one he'd seen looped around the shoulder of the Frogman. Nor was that rope slow in being applied to Till Orangespiegel, to the accompaniment of his screams and imprecations, by Button Bright and the Frogman while Levimeyerabloch held him down and the Woozy sat foursquare on his head.

After that little remained to be done but to tie the bundle of Till on the back of the dromedary (that of the Bactrian camel was already designated, by tradition, Cayke's riding place) and set off for Glinda's palace as the first and nearest court of justice that came to mind.

It was pleasant to rest at the end of the day but after an hour or two they wondered how restful it could get! The oxen, assisted now only, turn and turn about, by the cheetah and the Woozy, made slower work of hauling the plank wagon than ever before. A steady diet of coconuts was making its inroads as well on the strength and spirits of the wayfarers. Immediately after dark they stopped for the night.

When Levimeyerabloch, resting but uneasily, what with his bruises, wakened shortly after midnight, the cookie cook and

the trussed Till Orangespiegel, together with their attendant beasts of burden, were nowhere to be seen.

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

"Goodness me," said the Sorceress of the South, dismayed. "I guess I fell asleep before I read that far..."

"You've no idea where they went?"

"I'm perfectly certain of where, your grace," the Frogman put in his word, "though Mr. Lev, I'm afraid, doesn't seem quite convinced."

"And where might that be?" enquired Glinda on cue.

"Into the desert!" The Frogman paused dramatically.

"You astonish me."

"Yes. You see, poor Cayke had been broody ever since she met that brigand who kidnapped us - kindly, I may say. I think she just up and left in the night, heading back to find the fellow again...!"

"But," protested Levimeyerabloch, "the mad Practitioner! why take him along? That's where your theory falls down. He was nothing to her. Why, did they exchange two words yet?!"

"That," confessed the frog, "I haven't been able to account for—"

"Now *my* theory," broke in the merchant again, "is that the devilish O.P., resorting perhaps to magic, broke his bonds, took the woman as hostage, and made off—but obviously not out into the Deadly Desert."

"No," declared the Frogman. "Impossible." The rope itself is magic. I know to my cost. It can never be undone by the bound individual himself—only by another—"

"He talked the woman into releasing him!" proposed Lev.

"Oh, no, Cayke was sleeping near me - as her natural protector," explained Mr. Fruakx. "Any such conversation as you posit I could not have helped but be wakened by. No, whatever happened took place with the utmost stealth, and no chit-chat."

The Woozy put in a word for once. "Mistress Glinda," he said, "would the Great Book tell?"

"Well thought upon!" praised the witch. "It would—but fairly frustratingly, I fear. You see, the Book of Records tells *everything*, but terribly boiled down. And it only tells what, never why or how."

Still, they all agreed it would be as well to know whatever the Book *might* tell. Glinda rang for Minute Maid to clear away the breakfast things and they all returned to the library. "Furthermore," went on the sorceress as they walked, "if the errant pair have gone into the desert, the book will have nothing further to say. News from beyond the borders of Oz is only recorded in very broad outline - in a single daily digest."

Never mind. They took a look and there was something. "Cayke L. Baque and Till Orangespiegel departed for desert" was the terse report.

"How right you were, Mr. Fruakx," constated the Good Witch. "And how strange. I would give a lot to know under what circumstances they 'departed for desert'. But for the time being I fear we're not to know. "But now, my friends; what next? I'll keep a watching brief on the doings of those two. I'll be in immediate touch with the queen when—and if—they return to Oz. But until they do—or, I should say, he does—it doesn't seem there is much worry about. The front-to-backness of Oz appears to have been a thing of but a moment. The practitioner's manœuvre simply misfired. And from all you say he himself didn't know how to put it right - that is to say, *wrong*—again. In any case none of us here in Oz has any jurisdiction beyond the

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borders of Ozma's realm."

It was all rather unsatisfactory. The Frogman had grave compunctions about leaving his erstwhile traveling companion thus to her fate, even if it was a fate she'd chosen. Levimeyerabloch was still smarting at the thought of the bad treatment he had received at the hands of the Owl Practitioner. Revenge he did not particularly desire but he felt distinctly uneasy so long as the magic mirror remained in the hands of one who could be counted on to use it for mischief. The Woozy felt like a flat tire since he'd been so unceremoniously deserted by his sidekick the Sawhorse. He knew his friend had not funk'd it but only gone to summon aid. He supposed he'd better be trotting home again to the Emerald City to let them all know that most of the former party were safe and well. And Button Bright? That boy rarely had a motive that was discernible but he did occasionally have a thought. He said, "What about the orangeness?"

"Good lad," praised his admirer, the Sorceress of the South. "I must radio to Ozma about that—as well as a number of other items I've no doubt she's concerned about. Want to hear what she has to say?"

That pleased the youth. He was a normal boy in some ways and took an interest in mechanical things. He'd heard a good deal about wireless communication during his sojourns in the great world but had not so far seen it in action.

"If she's like me," said Glinda as she oscillated her crystals, zeroing in on the queen's call letters ECOZ, "she may be prepared to leave well enough alone. I don't mind if a slice of my domain is orange instead of red... Hello, Princess Ozma there? Glinda speaking... Oh, good!" In an aside to the group around her transmitter stand: "The Sawhorse has just arrived there." Then, "Not to worry!... Yes, that's quite true—but our friends are all safe." Here she named them. "Only Madam Cayke has returned—of her own choice, it seems - to the desert, and the fellow that was responsible for all the odd phenomena has gone with her... No, we *think* he's lost control of the satellite and we shouldn't be feeling any further effects of it. But in any case

there's little we can do as long as he stays out of Oz. What I'm mainly calling about, though; it seems the Orangespiegel character did succeed in turning a strip of our Oz territory orange in color. Oh, you did? I see. Oh, well, that's all right then. No, I don't see that it matters greatly... *Do you?!* Well, that's jolly. So we'll leave it that way for the time being...'?.. Yes, I think they'll be leaving shortly. Yes, the lot. They have a nice day for the journey..."

Then she signed off. "Ozma's longing to talk to all of you in detail, so I didn't like to say your departure would be delayed. But you must be exhausted! Wouldn't you rather wait and go on tomorrow?"

The party, thinking of their duty to their queen, demurred.

"But one thing I can guess you'd all like now," insisted their thoughtful hostess. "A hot bath!"

The wayfarers agreed that such would be far from amiss. After the alarming discovery of the disappearance of their prisoner (and others) the party had broken camp in the middle of the night and posted on with all possible haste, stopping at the Orangespiegel residence only five minutes to switch vehicles. With what rough kindness they could muster they broke the news to the hospitable Mistress Pill that her brother would in all likelihood never return to taste the caneton. Then they raced on at the top of the cheetah's speed, to draw up in the pre-dawn before the southern sorceress' palace more dusty and disheveled than ever. Yes, a bath would feel good.

Afterwards Glinda came out to the porte-cochère to wave them off. "Let's hope we've heard the last of that nine hours' wonder" (it hadn't been much longer than that), said the red witch. "And I hope you'll all come soon again for a visit under more harmonious auspices!"

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

They sojourned in the desert for six years. That was chicken-feed compared to the Israelites, who spent seven times that long in the wilderness, but Cayke and Till thought it was enough to be going on with. Yes, they were "Cayke" and "Till" to each other before many days had passed.

The way of their society was thus. Cayke woke in the tamarind thicket from a splendid dream in which she was being ravished (in sense two of the dictionary by the Bedouin with Bright Eyes. She knew then which way her destiny lay, that whatever was to be his fate hers must be also.

Silently she gathered her serape about her and crept away on hands and knees out of range of hearing of the sleeping Frogman and the others. The breeze that rattled the fronds of the swordbushes was her ally here. Then she rose to her feet and sped on, making straight south for the desert. It happened that her way thither led past the trees under which the party had enjoined the camels to remain, well out of hearing for themselves of the lewd complaints of the bound and helpless Orangespiegel.

When the Bactrian camel, who had grown quite fond of the mild and uncomplaining cookie cook, saw her erstwhile passenger hurrying away, she rose and sauntered after her. That

was the signal for the dromedary as well, indifferent to his load, to follow after, for where his cobber went he naturally went too.

Cayke took no notice but pressed on the mile to the desert rim. There, like Marlene some years later, she kicked off her shoes and proceeded to follow her man into the sandy waste. The going soon proved excessively difficult. The cook was protected in her robe from all physical discomfort but oh! how she slipped and skidded and sank past her ankles in the sand.

What one wouldn't give for a camel at this juncture. And lo! there was one, just five paces behind, placidly chewing a bit of old cud and stepping daintily across the moon-white wasteland. Cayke didn't wait to let herself be talked into it but went back to the camel, hauled herself up by the muzzle cord as she had been taught to do, and lodged herself between the humps. Then they went on.

By next nightfall the party had regained the oasis of a'l Wadr Uqqi where the camels had been first encountered. There they passed the dark hours. Humanitarian considerations had forced Cayke early on to remove the gag that partly inhibited Orangespiegel's speech. She gave him to drink of the canteen, then had to put up with his furious and now unimpeded squawks the rest of the day, a thing which wasn't very pleasant.

Regret for her altruism made her decline to untie the former O.P. when he begged for it. Her only concession was now and then to go to him and stuff his open mouth with tropical fruit. Otherwise she just sat under a palm and fanned herself as the cool of evening came on and listened to the distant rhythm of a flute and drums. Then she gathered her serape about her and slept to dream.

Till spent the night among the camels. The two animals of our story went to join their former companions at the corral, who when they saw them approaching chewed more vigorously in sign of recognition. For a bit the orangeman harangued the herd but when he realized he was getting no change he gave over.

Next morning the cookie cook was out and about early, mak-

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ing enquiries of all the desert urchins and their mothers as to who and where her lover might be. Fortunately—and no little surprisingly - everyone in Oz, in the surrounding, desert, and on all the rest of the continent spoke English. (It's always tiresome for a story teller to have to make allowances for the fact that very likely a portion of his characters don't understand a word of what other portions are saying.)

No one, alas, was able to tell her a thing. Oh, yes, some of the urchins had witnessed the unceremonious deposition there some days earlier of the cook and her companion, but nobody had recognized the band of outlaws who brought them. There were so many such bands operating in the desert you couldn't hope to keep up with them all. She did learn where the next oasis lay, however, and determined to try her luck there. It was stated to be further west-southwest and that suited her book very well.

During the long hours on camelback Cayke had had time for a good deal of reflection. Her thoughts of her love occupied an hour or two. But there she had so little to go on! Soon she found herself merely rethinking thoughts she had had before. She moved on to consideration of her willy-nilly companion. Heaven knew she would never have chosen to travel with the fellow! But now that she had him she wondered how she might best behave.

The idea of untying him and letting him loose in the dismal and dangerous desert did not please her essentially kindly soul. He would have to go on with her for a while until they reached a place where he might obtain the essentials for continuing to survive. Then, by the time they did reach such a place she had had time to think further. She realized she could best please her friends, whose abandonment even now was troubling her conscience quite a bit, by keeping the ex-Owl Practitioner out of their hair for as long as possible.

As she prepared to leave a'l Wadr Uqqi she asked the orangeman what his plans were. "The camels probably won't separate, you see, and I'll be wanting mine to travel on with."

"Plans?" shrieked the unregenerate Till. "Of course I plan to

return to my orange kingdom—" it had got that far in his fantasies — "there to make a crown - and wear it! One day all Oz will be orange - and mine!"

"Oh," said the cook. "Well, then you'd better stay where you are." She stopped his mouth with dates and left the oasis, the camels in tow.

Three months later they were not much forwarder. Cayke had heard rumors of a raid on a desert city far away and was convinced her idol had played some role there, either as vandal or hero. She made for Fuz but when she arrived found all peaceful and the descent by brigands almost forgotten. As for Till, on a promise of good conduct he had been untied and allowed a certain leeway, provided he did not attempt to make off. By now they were so far away across desert wastes from Oz that the cookie cook thought she had little to fear from a decamping by the orangeman.

She had found out, by trial and error, the characteristics of the Frogman's magic rope. It could be fitted to—and removed from - a candidate for binding with a flick of the wrist and might easily be removed by anyone *except* the person bound. The threat of a reapplication of the rope to himself kept erring Till in hand. When not using it, Cayke kept the cord in her saddlebag and woe betide any thief who might attempt to take it from her steed. The weight of two camels would be more than anyone could bear.

Still, the clever ex-O.P. might have outwitted the cook in time and used her own rope against her but for the cleverness of that same cook. Not in the way you think, however! It was Cayke's cleverness with a cookie sheet that brought about her downfall, but also wrote 'finis' to the grandiose plans of Orangespiegel. Her cleverness and her sense of fair play. Those can be dangerous qualities in the wrong hands!

It was Cayke's sense of fair play, her altruism, her generosity, her self-respect—or whatever we call that troublesome quality that makes us all insist on giving in return for what we get. The quality caused her to offer her services as baker in

exchange for her food in the places where she turned up. Of course once those services were accepted her fame as a cook spread and it was not many years before the rumor reached the court - if 'court' it could be called; certainly it was a base court—of the dread Dewan of the Deadly Desert.

The Dewan never got anything fit to eat. Like many of those who dwelt in the desert he mostly subsisted on dates. There wasn't much you could do to those on the way from tree to mouth to spoil them. Roll them in the dirt a bit, and of course they did that. But otherwise ...? So he was constantly alert to tales of anything good to eat and when he heard that a masterless master chef was abroad in his dewanity he sent for her.

'Sent for' to the Dewan meant to order out his light brigade, which flew, all eighteen strong (it was a *very* light brigade), on wings of song ("The Riff") to Maqq Abr, the dry-gulch village where Cayke at that period was reinforcing her culinary celebrity with her peppermint hermits, her coalhouse cookies, and her "desert rocks", a new item in her repertoire, devised in response to local conditions and ingredients. You'll want to try them. Here's the recipe;

Blend one cup of flour, one teaspoon of baking powder and a quarter teaspoon of salt. Cut in half a cup of fat until particles are pea-sized. Stir in a cup of finely chopped nuts, a cup of shredded coconut, half a packed cup of chopped dates, half a cup of raisins, and an egg. Blend well and chill for an hour. Place one-inch balls half an inch apart on a greased cookie sheet and flatten slightly. Bake about fifteen minutes in an oven preheated to 350°F. (175°C .) until golden brown.

"Taste one, do," urged Cayke when the brigade swept up to her tent kitchen that afternoon. Then she saw which were the bright eyes that regarded her from under a black-and-beige tarboosh and she fainted incontinently away.

When she awoke she was in the arms of her lover and he was on the back of a fleet desert pony, which however controlled its fleetness to where Cayke's two camels could keep up with the rollicking desert band. Till Orangespiegel was somewhere

in the train. The brigade hadn't cared about kidnapping him but had been urged to do so by the grateful inhabitants of Maqq Abr.

Talk between the brigadier and his captive was slight. When evening came he deposited her gently but firmly under an oleander and brought her rose water in a copper bowl. "Here's a loaf of bread," he said, dropping down beside her on the spread carpet. "Wine there, if you fancy it. Oh, and here's a book of verses. I haven't much conversation But I can sing to you." And he did; "The Desert Song". The wilderness was paradise—and how!

Before dawn they started on again. Late that night they arrived in the capital—if you could so designate it—of His Dread Dewanity. The Dewan had cleaned up his act a little, perforce, since the flying visit of Princess Ozma to his serai^s but it was still pretty much of a dump. Cayke wrung her hand when she saw the mess hall (which was rightly named).

She never saw her love again—or if she did it was in the sequel. He had done his duty when he delivered the captive to his overlord—but he had done it with kindness, even, briefly, to the last full measure of devotion. Cayke knew she would live on it the rest of her life.

That life settled into a routine in the palace kitchens. Cayke had done wandering. She was most likely to see her idol again by remaining where she was, not by continuing to scour the desert. She baked from dawn to dark and to some extent enjoyed what she was doing. For some time she was preoccupied with introducing standards of cleanliness in the cooking quarters. Sometimes she would catch herself humming the airs from *The Desert Song*.

What of Till Orangespiegel? Oh, he was flung without benefit of clergy into a cell, in fact the one occupied on another occasion by the Woozy and Scraps the Patchwork Girl. In that modest setting he arrived, in time, at two of the most far-reaching motives of his life.

§ See, once more, *In Other Lands Than Oz*. Editor's note.

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The second of these grew out of the first. The first motive was a tender regard for the cookie cook. Orangespiegel was treated with well-deserved and extensive cruelty by his jailers. They did not especially hate him nor were they exceptionally bad men. They just had their role to play in the cosmic scheme of things. That role was to soften up the vain headstrong schemer by their harshness so that he would have a change of heart. But the change of heart might not have come about if Orangespiegel had not begun to care about Cayke.

She came every day to the street window of Till's cell and pushed under the bars a tray of the day's broken cookie remains. Across the orangeman's life at this time brushed just one soft silken garment and it was the skirts of the cookie cook's Mother-Hubbard. He early learned to look forward to her cool compassionate visits with frantic longing. He found the woman's charms were beginning to ravish him (in sense three of the dictionary).

Cayke felt nothing; she was just being kind. But one day, when they had been at Far-Es-Ukaam almost four years, she had an additional kindly thought. She sought, and was granted, permission to enter the prisoner's cell, whereupon they had this conversation:

Cayke: I hate to see you eating your heart out with hatred.

Till: What would have have me do, woman? To pray for them that have done scath to me?

Cayke: Do not be sarcastic. Instead of plotting to undertake the death of all the world, use your gifts to plan constructive action that will merit you the plaudits of the crowd. (She had chosen to use strangely stilted language as being more formal and hence perhaps more persuasive.)

Till: What might that action be, pray tell?

Cayke: How to make points with Princess Ozma and the powers that be in Oz—who after all never did you any harm—when, as we surely shall, one day we are freed to return to our homeland.

Till: I'll think about it. For your sake only, mind!

It was enough. Just for laughs he tried what it might give to

forget all his thwarted ambitions and well-earned defeats and to think creatively about his problems.

It worked! The first thing he did was that, no matter how he'd like to detest it, he thought with 'love' about the critique of his 'enemy' Levimeyerabloch of his, Till's, procedure with the magic mirrors. 'Let's see now,' he said to himself as he sat on his pile of shavings in the corner of the cell and munched the remains of gingersnaps and macaroons. 'I do remember me, the miserable - no, the dear, sweet - peddler told me I was a dialectician, no proper magician. I wonder what he meant by that.'

The ex-O.P. knew well enough what was meant. He just didn't like to admit it to himself. He had completely misread the formulae in his encyclopedia. The letters into which he had read so much (here he drew out the lacy fragment of paper on which he had jotted his aide-mémoire so many years ago): that "OP" did not refer to any operator of the charm. He might call himself "owl practitioner" or "Olive Prouty" or "old port" or "Oliver Perry" or "other people" till he was azure of aspect but it would have no effect upon the pragmatic solid substance of mirror magic. Likewise it was ridiculous to assign Levimeyerabloch the name of "Oy" and put him incapably to guiding the magic mirror in its powerful play. He, Till Orangespiegel, had goofed, and well deserved the fiasco into which his scheme had devolved.

That much cleared from his thinking, what remained?

Well, there was the magic itself, which was tangible enough and which he had not erred in the preparation of. The magic mirror WAS magic - and vastly potent. If he could but get back to the set-up as it had existed and *himself* guide the mirror, what miracles might not yet take place?

He'd retrieve the errant "tea-tray" —surely some way he'd be able to get it back!—and then... he would enorange all Oz, take over the Emerald City and turn it into the Amber City... !

No, he wouldn't! He was regenerate now. Yes, he *was*—for the sake of Cayke's blue eyes—and if he got back his magic he was going to use it for the general, not private, good.

And then? Well, he'd recover the smallest, the actually magic,

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mirror as well. No one knew it but Till himself but at the time he had feared that Lev and the others might try to take it from him by force—or worse, smash it in their eagerness—he had stuffed the magic mirror in a secret hiding place. Where under the sun and moon might be that hiding place now?!

But by the time he had got that far in his cogitations, Till Orangespiegel was saved for the side of the angels.

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

Mr. Fruakx, Levimeyerabloch, Button Bright and the Woozy had not been standing still all the while Cayke and Till roamed the desert. First there was their gala reception at the Emerald City where they told the assembled celebrities of their stirring adventures of the previous weeks.

"We had our own adventures!" boasted Princess Dorothy, "though funnily enough we never left home." Then she related to the new-arrived travelers all about the awful confusions of the directions reversal and the strange case of the slice of orange that had lain—and still lay—over the land. "But Ozma says let it stay," she ended a wee bit petulantly. Like all true lovers of Oz she was somewhat conservative and wanted everything always to stay just as it always had been; unchanging, like a cardboard flower.

"Yes," soothed the fairy queen. "It's not doing any harm exactly. And you know, I always did have in the back of my mind—quite unarticulated but still there—a feeling there was something, shall we say 'unsymmetrical'? about just one of the six primary, rainbow, colors being omitted from the Oz color pattern."

"Funny you should say that, your grace," remarked Lev the peddler, drawing a little nearer the royal seat. "That was what

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the Orangespiegel person always maintained.”

“Now tell me about him,” commanded the Girl Ruler kindly. As the others drifted away by twos and threes to further toast and tease the Woozy, frog, and boy, she rested her chin in her hand and looked at the itinerant merchant expectantly.

He told her all he knew and tried not to harbor resentments as he did it.

“You think then he’s not really a dangerous individual,” summed up Ozma, “a-socially motivated?”

“Not really,” admitted Lev. “He is very vain and boastful and had certain—rather strong—delusions of grandeur, and then let’s not forget that the tradition of merry—or even not so merry - pranks is strong in his family.”

“It might be best then to allow him to stay out of the country for a while?”

“Mm, yes, I think so,” agreed Lev. “There’s just one thing that worries me, Your Majesty—”

“That being..?”

“Well, the man still retains the magic mirror he created. It’s potent. I held it myself and I could feel how it pulled at - and was pulled by—that flying projectile in the sky. It was all I could do to keep my grasp on it. Some awfully powerful force was at work there! though I couldn’t begin to explain what. Of course the Till creature blamed me for willfully ‘waving it about’! He’d never held or attempted to control the newly magicized mirror. He didn’t know what a powerful talisman he had!”

“And so?”

“He had the idea that certain individuals or entities, designated by particular ‘mystic’ code letters or names, had to play a part in any successful trolldom. I don’t think so. And one day, if he’s not totally pig-headed and consequently allows his wise-owl head its turn, he’s going to realize just how much his mirror after all can do. Then watch out!”

“Oh, dear.” Ozma looked solemn. “Do you think it might be advisable to—er, take the talisman away from him while there’s time?”

"I should say, the moment when and if he tries to re-enter Oz, yes, Your Highness."

"Shall you and I agree then?: whenever either gets word the man is back we'll meet and plan our strategy?"

That's how they left it, and Levimeyerabloch went off about his itinerant business. With him went the Frogman, who felt he had found at last, in constant travel, a happy medium between ponds that were either too big or too small for him. They stayed together for several years until the Frogman, who had taken to wearing checked or spotted weskits, accepted a position as barker—or croaker—with a traveling carney, a niche that fitted his personality rather well.

The Woozy, having had his run, settled down contentedly in the palace yards and stables again, and Button Bright disappeared, a thing he did regularly without anyone ever taking it seriously[§].

Years passed by and the strange momentary reversals of the land's directions became only a memory, though a vivid one, with the "Orange Slice", as the region came to be known, as a daily reminder of it. Those in the know breathed gradually easier as it became clear that the assumed author of the freak was not imminently going to repeat it.

In 1919 a whole bevy of peculiar strangers came to Oz, providing a momentary diversion[§]. Of more lasting consequence was the arrival in the same year of the Royal Historian of Oz himself. In his honor the tower on the westward side of the Palace of Magic, matching the Wizard's own, was redecorated and there the R.H. resided for a number of years - until he moved to the rambling old Wimugiqua Hotel on the outskirts of the city, with its broad verandahs, golf links, and artificial fly-casting ponds, where he said he felt more like he "belonged". It had a charming prospect over Lake Quad.

Ozma and the Wizard became the greatest friends with the Historian: 'Frank', as he asked to be called, without tiresome

§ See *The Scarecrow of Oz*.

§ See *The Green Dolphin of Oz*. Editor's notes.

adulation. He was invited to conference whenever any matter of policy arose. In particular the group loved to talk over the changes in the character of Oz that were taking place during the tenure of the new Royal Historian.

“Frankly” (as anything said by that genial gentleman must, by definition, be) “I like the lighter more youthful rollicking manner of things now,” opined the old Historian. “Let’s face it: in my time in office the atmosphere was getting a bit stodgy. There was an awe-stricken, too solemn attitude to such personages as yourself, my dear—” here he laid a grandfatherly hand on Ozma’s sleeve— “which was quite absent from the first, un-self-conscious books.”

His listeners didn’t try to contradict him. “But now this Orange Slice, R.H.—er, Frank: what’s your feeling about that?” asked the Wizard.

“It is a bit much, isn’t it?” said the Historian with a chuckle. “And yet when you get right down to it, why not?... Though next thing we know there’ll be a brown, grey, black, or white country as well, I suppose.”

“Oh, I think there’s enough of those last two out in the great world,” demurred Ozma. “There, I’m told, everything is either black or white.”

“Except Sweden,” put in the Wizard; “there it’s all grey.”

“Well, Kansas too,” reminded the Historian “—at least, some years ago. Anyway, let’s hope *those* colors—or lack of them—never spread to Oz,” he concluded piously.

“But brown now,” said Ozma musingly. “I may have to work on that.”

And they parted with pleasant laughter.

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

What goes up must come down.

In the case of the jet-(and magic-) propelled ‘tea-tray’ this began to happen three years, three months, and three days after that equinox when all Oz suddenly went flopsy-flurvy - and partly orange to boot. Another three years/months/days and the thing was within shooting distance of Oz again. Well, of the whole Earth, of course, but only Oz could be affected by the magic (at second hand) of the mirror.

The period coincided with that of the return of Till Orangespiegel to the magic land. That happened in a droll way about a year after he had decided to turn over a new leaf and become a force for good in his adopted country.

The camels who for so many months had been the supporters of Cayke and Till in their desert wanderings had, on the occasion of the couple’s reduction to servitude by the Dewan, been flung—well, shoved—into one of the ruler’s camel pens. There they made a point of not talking, so no one ever learned that they were special, Ozian, camels whom it would be well to keep under particular lock and key. Hence, the first time opportunity permitted, the two animals took to their heels (do camels *have* heels?) and made quietly off.

They did not forget their erstwhile companions, however.

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After only five years back in their accustomed Oz setting the two grew restive again and resolved to revisit places fragrant with memory. Keeping to desert areas where they could get all the sagebrush and tumbleweeds they had need of to browse on, they made their way back to Far-Es-Ukaam, which, indeed, was nearly as far as one could come and still be in the Deadly Desert, for it lay only a league from the Burzee border.

There, ambling along an insignificant side street, the two camels happened to pass the jailhouse window where Till Orangespiegel leaned all day, gazing out in despondent and utter boredom.

"Hey!!" he yelled and began to jump up a down. "Med! Mel! Stop!! It's me!"

The camels paused and raised their eyebrows, just as if the ex-O.P. were not one of two they had come all that way to find. Then with suitable dignity they drew near jail window and gravely enquired of the prisoner how he was.

He told them. His complete reply would cover a couple of pages, so we'll skip it. In the course of conversation he did also reveal where and how the cookie cook was. "She too dreams of the day when we'll escape," he said pointedly.

The camels hemmed and hawed and chewed a little, then said, "Wait here!" and sauntered off.

When they were out of sight they shifted gears and fairly *ran* down the avenue leading to the servants' entrance of the capital messuage (also well named) of the Dewan. There they sent in their card and in a few minutes Cayke appeared, flapping her apron and thrilled to see her old friends.

"Can you spare a moment?" said Mel the Bactrian camel.

"Or a few years?" added Med.

A twinkle adorned Cayke's blue eye and she said, "I think so! I'll just get my things." Then she ran inside, threw around her her serape, rummaged in an armoire for her rope, and rejoined her long-lost comrades for the flight to freedom.

Before anyone in lethargic Far-Es-Ukaam troubled to take note of what they were up to the trio made their way unobtru-

sively back to the jail. There it was but the work of a moment for Cayke to loop the (infinitely stretchable) rope about Mel's hinder hump, then knot the other end through the bars of Till's window.

One long strong pull by the camel and the whole metal grating popped out, followed by the collapse of the entire mud-brick wall of the cell. A thick cloud of grey dust swirled up—and when it cleared none of the Ozites was anywhere to be seen.

By nightfall the quartet felt themselves safe from pursuit. The Dewan, who was not dumb, only dirty, had put together, from hints gathered over the years in his scant dealings with his pastry cook, a conviction that, in matters touching the cook, Brigadier Gosj-al-Gitowtt and his merry men would not be as cruel as they ought. No use sending them after the flying foursome. They would probably not find them.

In a couple of weeks of oasis-hopping the camels and their riders made it back to Quadlinga, whence it was a matter of one or two days' journey to reach the spherodome of the Orangespiegels.

"What ho! then, Pill my dear," cried her brother at the door, trying to be hearty and not show the ravages of five years in a cell. "Sorry I was delayed. Is that caneton still edible?"

Pill had a hand on a hip and a quizzical, though withal overjoyed, look in her eye. She gave her brother a peck. "Not that caneton, dear; it got too high, in the end. But A caneton. Just piping hot. And an extra jug of orange sauce with yams in it, on the side... You see, I knew you were coming."

Till Orangespiegel really did do a double take at that intelligence. "H-how so?" he stammered.

At that the sliding doors to the drawing room opened and a merry throng appeared. Levimeyerabloch, Mr. Fruakx the Frogman, Button Bright, and even the Woozy! (The Charming Cheetah was having rather a dull time of it in the stable.)

Lev stepped forward and offered a cordial hand while the Frogman flew into the embrace of Cayke the cookie cook—and for a while there was hubbub. When the noise subsided

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Orangespiegel presented Cayke formally to his sister.

"She's lovely," gushed Pill.

"She's engaged," countered Till, "—to me!"

"She uses G.I. soap," put in Button Bright in explanation.

"'Engaged'!?" echoed everyone with animation.

Then Orangespiegel told the circumstances. "Yes. We decided on it during our journey out of the desert. She's marrying me for my honey."

The Woozy could understand that motivation. The others required more explanation. "I adore her, you see," the magic-dabbler filled them in. "She can't see me for lookin'. Cayke loves a bold bedouin—what's his name again?: Gosj-al-Gitowtt. But he's unavailable. And when I happened to let drop that our orange-blossom bees produce the finest honey in all Quadlinga, if not all Oz—"

"That's right," confirmed the Woozy, who had had time to become an expert on Orangespiegel Entire.

"Well, Cayke decided she might consent to a trial engagement. It turns out honey-baking is one of her specialities. You must try her honey chews and nectar nuggets..."

The two ladies in short order got confidential over recipes and immediately such phrases could be heard coming from them as "a pinch of cardamom" and "reserve the skim and gratin".

"Speaking of 'skim'," said Levimeyerabloch, "is the pot on, dear Madam Pill?" He was feeling vastly relieved that he need not engage in fisticuffs with Orangespiegel, from whom he had parted in such anger.

"Coming right up," confirmed his hostess and carried Cayke off to the kitchen.

"But this is wonderful!" cried Till. "My sister says you knew we were coming'."

"That's right," the peddler constated, as the males all settled down in the drawing room. "Witch Glinda got the word: the 'Glinda's Book of Records', you know. I think Ozma said it read something like 'Till Orangespiegel, reformed, leaves for home.' Glinda radiod Ozma, Ozma rounded up me and the others—

and here we are..."

"Splendid, splendid," commended the ex-Owl Practitioner. This being friendly instead of inimical was already bearing fruit, it looked like! "A little welcoming-home committee?" he characterized.

"Partly that, surely," agreed Lev. "But I must be frank, Mr. Orangespiegel; we're also here to confirm that word reformed' and just to make sure that you, in fact, do plan no further employment of the magic mirror—" He held up a hand as Orangespiegel seemed about to protest. "There are compensations! Princess Ozma has taken a liking to the 'Orange Slice' as we call it and agrees to permitting a very sizeable wedge of her domain to remain orange in color. And you are to be governor! dependent upon the extent of your co-operation with her over-all plan for the governance of Oz and the suppression of unnecessary magic."

Various features of Lev's speech might have nettled the old vainglorious and testy Till Orangespiegel but the five years in durance vile - and Cayke's blandishments—had after all mellowed the practitioner and he had learned patience—and was now seeing how it paid! He held his peace, put on a gratified expression, and he and the road merchant presently went in to dinner arm in arm.

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

After the commotion in 1917 Princess Ozma, urgently supported in her view by the Wizard Oz and the learned Professor Wogglebug, decided it was important to increase the scope of Oz astronomical observatories. She was not in ignorance of the fact that besides magic, a flying projectile had caused the strange though fleeting reversal of directions in Oz. It might be as well to keep an eye on that projectile, which, however, had very soon flown beyond the range of existing Oz telescopes.

Six and a half years was more than enough time to see the ordering and establishment of the new telescopes, one in the Wizard's tower and the other, even more powerful, on top of the Green Mountain in a new extension of the College of Knowledge.

It was here, at the Emerald City—Quadling border, one night early in 1924, that the professor himself was doing duty at round-the-clock monitoring of the telescope when he saw something that threw him into the greatest excitement. His agitation was such that he leapt on the telescope, crawled up it to the aperture in the observatory dome, and launched himself into the night sky. With a great clittering of wings he flew away into the north.

Oz Diggs was awakened at the Palace of Magic and hurried with the professor one flight up to *his* observatory. One glance

was sufficient to confirm that the errant “tea-tray” was indeed back within telescopic range and presumably hurrying towards Earth “How much time do you give it, H.M.?” asked the Wizard.

Can wogglebugs blush? If so, this one did. “It was most unprofessional of me,” he confessed. “I was too agitated! I didn’t stop to make the proper calculations. How ever, I’ll hazard a guess:two days? ... Then I’m very much afraid we’ll see a replay of that upsetting directions -reversal we had before. And there’s no telling how long it will last, with the projectile going in the opposite direction from previously—”

“Indeed!” broke in the Wizard. “What if it should be captured by the earth’s pull and go into orbit?!”

“Hmm, a serious possibility. But there are so many variables! Do we know whether the presumed enchantment will still be in effect? That journey through deep space may have ‘cleaned’ the object of magic influences. It *may* fly harmlessly past.”

“Never mind. I don’t think we should lose any time in getting with Ozma over this,” opined the Wizard.

The fairy ruler when awakened threw on a peignoir and hurried into conference with the two savants in her private sitting room. She agreed about the unpredictability of behavior of the tea-tray. “Let’s don’t take any chances. I’ll radio through to the Lords of Light and alert them. They can usually deal with matters of this sort—”

“But, Your Majesty, don’t forget,” cautioned the Wogglebug, “that there may still be magic at play here—whereas the Lords’ influence, if I’m not mistaken, is limited solely to NATURAL cosmic phenomena.”

“Oh dear, that wretched magic mirror again! ” exclaimed the Princess. “You’re perfectly right, professor. Well, there’s nothing for it. We must simply send word to the party at Orangespiegel’s: to get possession of the mirror at all costs. Glinda will know how to deal with it. We mustn’t leave a stone unturned—” She broke off, started again; “How much time do you give us, gentlemen?”

Again the wise men had bolted without doing calculations! But time had seemed of the essence in letting the Girl Ruler know of their quandary. "Three days?" hazarded the Wizard.

"Two," stated Prof. Wogglebug :with more assurance.

"Oh, goodness!" exclaimed Ozma. "We must make haste. Half a tick, my friends!" she adjured jocularly and ran away into her dressing room. In a moment she was back, in blue jeans and a shirt and doing up her hair brusquely with a rubber band. "Come on!" and she led the way, half running down the malachite corridor heading for the mews.

The Sawhorse never slept so was alert and frisky as usual when his beloved mistress came to him. Ozma told him the story concisely. "You've got that?" she demanded. The horse creaked in assent. "Off you go then!.. They're to be polite; it seems the man Orangespiegel is prepared to listen to reason. But they must get possession of the magic mirror without fail - and take it to Glinda!"

Then the Sawhorse was off like the wind.

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

Levimeyerabloch was a kindly man—though he knew a bargain when he saw it. He also knew unhappiness when he saw it. He saw it in just five minutes the time he and his companions were forced to inform Mistress Pill Orangespiegel that her brother in all likelihood would be returning late or never.

Therefore, when he left the Emerald City in 1917 his first concern was to let his peripatetic business dealings take him at the first opportunity back to the orange spherodome. He made out that he was on an all-out drive to collect rags, bones, and bottles, but in fact his primary care was to ascertain that Pill was all right. She had been too generous a hostess—in happier days—for him to be able to ignore her trouble now.

“Bottles?” said the goodwife at the door. “Lots of those. But I suppose you mean empty ones? Ours are all full—of orange curaçao Till put up over the years.” At the mention of her brother a sigh escaped along with the woman’s words. Lev winced.

“Come in, please,” Mme. Pill went on. “I’m going to serve you a glass of the very curaçao.” As the merchant followed her into her sewing room Pill went on; “Bones? Now where would we get those? We wouldn’t think of going against Princess Ozma’s edicts and one of those prohibits the eating of any living creatures.”

She WAS naive, thought Lev. Was she really no more clued in than that she had no idea of her brother's many highly extra-legal activities? And as for not eating living creatures, that was a rule broken, alas - or not?, hundreds of times a day on the sly by Oz inhabitants who enjoyed a broiled trout or a roast pigeon as well as anybody. What about the gazelles Till had laid on for Lev's own cheetah without a moment's demur? Such would provide bones and to spare—if Pill were let know about them!

But the lady was going on: "Now, rags: there I can accommodate you, I think. At least would you count tatty blankets as rags?"

"These I could count as rags, yes," affirmed the peddler, smacking his lips over the liqueur tangy with the bitter peel of a hundred sun-ripened fruits.

"And what about that frightful old mattress you all used on Till's last excursion?" Another sigh. "I don't know why you bothered to bring it back. It's still in the dray out in the shed. It's full of holes—and mice too, like as not."

"I'll take it off your hands," promised Lev.

Well, that was the beginning—or at any rate a rebeginning. Pill was pleased to have a man to do for again and Lev was pleased to be done for; however, he was amused to jest to himself, as a ladies' man he was by no means done-for! He ended staying as Miss Orangespiegel's guest for a week that time and when he moved on to call again at Sorceress Glinda's he was singing her praises loudly.

"Really a most excellent woman," he declared to the red ruler; "she goes a long way to make up for the shortcomings of her brother."

From then on the merchant managed to call in at the spherodome at least once every two months on his rounds. It was not long before he was assigned his own permanent room in the round orange mansion and there he would come and go almost as lord of the manor. Pill had just brought him breakfast in bed there on the morning after her brother's long-delayed

return home when the couple heard a loud commotion beyond the carrot-colored curtains.

"I thought I heard a cheetah squeal!" declared Levimeyerabloch.

"And I heard a clatter of hoofs," returned his hostess. "But we keep no horses!"

Now there could be no doubt something was afoot, for they heard a very loud gruzzing right under Lev's window.

The peddler drew his dressing gown about him and jumped out of bed to run to the window. The carrot curtains pulled asunder - and the couple stuck their heads out.

The Sawhorse was hardly winded. He glanced up, then beat a tattoo with his hoofs in gratification and whinnied a greeting.

"He's come to see you!" yelled the Woozy enjoying the excitement. "Have you got the magic mirror?!"

"*I?* I should be having the magic mirror?! Mr. Till and I have not even spoken of it yet."

"The Princess—" began the Sawhorse. For him there was only one Princess. "The Princess!" he rebegan. But the Sawhorse hardly ever finished anything, that is: speeches.

"Ozma has to have it!" explained the Woozy. "At least; Mr. Orangespiegel isn't to have it! I mean, if he has it, he has to—not have it!... Oh, I'm not explaining this well... Where's Mr. O.?"

"Wait a minute! I'm coming down!" Levimeyerabloch threw on his caftan and slippers and followed Madam Pill downstairs.

In ten minutes everybody in the house was in congress assembled around the dining table. All the news the Sawhorse brought had been expounded and the crisis stood clear to all. Everything hung on the magic mirror. And all eyes hung on Till Orangespiegel.

"Oh—er, the magic mirror!" said he, and his owl eyes blinked, though not very wisely. "I'm afraid I haven't got it!"

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

“Rush, rush! Oh, hasten! “ cried Lev the peddler to the Charming Cheetah.

“I’m rushing all I can,” the cheetah threw over his shoulder, but halved again as much his efforts and the buggy *almost* achieved the speed of light - if it didn’t fall apart first.

The poor cheetah had almost as much as he could handle. Crammed in the buggy were Levimeyerabloch, Till Orangespiegel, the Frogman and Button Bright. Alongside him on the (just here) orange brick road flew the Sawhorse, and somewhere in the rear lolloped the Woozy, falling, alas, more behind every moment. (The ladies, perhaps with sighs of relief, had stayed home in the orange mansion.)

The Sorceress of the South was waiting the terrace when the still-happily-one-piece carriage drew up in a swirl of dust. “Right!” she cried without ceremony or even saying Hello. “Follow me to the work room.” And when they got there: “Ozma’s been on the air to me. I know about the emergency. The Book said you were on the way. What can I do for you?” she enquired as they all took seats.

“Hi, Queen,” said Button Bright.

“Hello, Butt.” Glinda flashed the boy a brilliant but brief smile. It was seven years later and he was still ten years old (to

look at). Her glance traveled back to Till Orangespiegel and the peddler.

"Your Magicty!" exclaimed Levimeyerabloch "you wouldn't by any chance remember that old mattress I unloaded here six - maybe seven years ago?"

"A *mattress*?" The witch smiled in amusement - but quickly she racked her memory. "I can't be sure. I have a vague recollection of something—"

"It was all full of holes," prompted Lev, "—useless. I just wanted rid of it. You were kind enough—"

"Yes!" stated the sorceress, illumination suddenly breaking through. "I got Jinjur to dispose of it." She flicked a switch on her work-bench. A moment's delay, then "General? Glinda speaking. A certain old mattress - with orange ticking—in a design of sunbursts—" It was all coming back to her. "Ah! you do? ... Yes. Hold everything. We'll be right over. What?"

Glinda turned aside to the others. "She wants to know why it's wanted ... ? "

"The magic mirror's in it!" blurted Till Orangespiegel without omsweep.

"Oh, great heavens!" cried Glinda. "This *is* serious." Then, "Jinjur! be checking what happened to it!"

In a quarter of an hour the party were gathered in ex-General Jinjur's bachelor quarters near the gatehouse. "Sure," said Jinjur with no hesitation, "I remember the incident. Nutt took it off my hands—that's Corporal Margaret Nutt, retired. She and Munn and some of the others were going camping and thought they could get some use out of it. I'll have Munn in." Jinjur in her turn flipped a switch.

"Corporal Nutt's retired?" asked Glinda. "I'd forgotten."

"*She'd* forgotten!" said Jinjur with a flash of wit. "That is, she was getting forgetful. That's why she took her discharge early. It's been a few years now. I don't think she was always too careful bout holding down the aging process."

The condition of agelessness for living creatures in Oz was not an automatic thing. If it were, all babies would remain

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forever one day old in appearance and development, but in fact they grew and aged normally until instructed, at very tender years, by their elders how to slow down or stop the aging process. This was accomplished by a brief easy daily ritual we won't go into here. But Nut Meg, as she was called by her fellows, had, it seemed, been careless.

"Ah, Munn; come in," ordered Jinjur. "There was an old mattress. You and Nutt and some of the others took it over—back in 'seventeen. I think you meant to use it on some camping expedition or other. Know what became of it?"

Brigadier Sinny Munn puckered her brow. "Why, yes, General," she said in a moment. "We left all that gear with Nutt. The party ended up at what was to be her retirement cottage."

"Could you point out the place to us? Looks like her grace and some of us will have to go interview Nutt."

Back at the palace they all piled into swan chariots half an hour later and took off. The flight to the Nutt cottage took only twenty minutes as performed by the swift swans but that was time enough for there all to enjoy a sweeping view over Glinda's red demesne. As the pink palace faded from view they came in sight of a stand of mighty redwoods to the east—and far away in the west was an orange horizon.

At least... "I know I must be wrong, your grace," said the Frogman, who was sitting opposite Glinda, "but I have the funniest feeling we're flying south - though I know the general said Miss Nutt's cottage was to the north."

"That's right," affirmed the Sorceress. "See? the sun's right behind us. And that forest lies to the northeast of my palace. Wait a minute! Where *is* the forest? Just a second ago—That's queer; it seems to be underneath us." Hastily Glinda oriented herself - or tried to. They were still flying with the sun at their backs. "Crumbs!" the witch permitted herself an expletive. "It's starting again!"

She trumpeted a signal to her swan, then called across to those in the other chariot; "Just keep your bird flying straight on! away from the sun. And the rest of you had better keep your

eyes shut till we land. You'll get less confused that way!"

The sorceress gave no further explanation but it may not have been necessary. They could all tell something most uncanny was going on. At one moment the orange horizon would seem to be west, the next moment it was in the east. 'If only,' thought Glinda rather wildly, 'we could fly upside down! Then everything would still seem right.' But that would only disorient the swans as well, who up to now continued to fly unperturbed—besides dumping overboard anybody without a *very* firm grip.

One thing was sure by the time they alighted—with a gasp of relief by the worried witch—on the lawn outside a round pink bungalow; everybody was left-handed.

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

“...But if the sun is the center of all things—and if the world goes round and round—why, then it’s sure that anything that goes up will come down - or perhaps more than that...” said the grey-haired Margaret Nutt.

“Oh, dear, this is most distressing,” mourned Sorceress Glinda in an aside to Levimeyerabloch. To Nut Meg she said, “Well, it’s been delightful, corporal. You nettle tea is most stimulating. And I think we all loved the seed cakes. But we mustn’t keep you...”

Outside she voiced her concern. “A frightful pity Miss Nutt wasn’t careful to keep from aging!” A more sophisticated age would have mentioned the name Ahlsheimer. “She doesn’t *look* much more than fifty, if that. But she remembers nothing! ...What next?”

“There’s got to be some way to find out what happened to that mattress,” insisted Till Orangespiegel.

“Mattress-schmattress!” cried Lev. “It’s the mirror that counts. It *could* have fallen out of the mattress any time this seven years. It’s worse than a needle in a haystack. It could be *anywhere*.”

“Wait!” cried Glinda. “The Magic Picture. Ozma’s Magic Picture! That would show where the mirror is. Oh, but we’re leagues from there! and every minute counts.”

The Sawhorse neighed loudly and Glinda gave a start. "Yes, Lignum, she assented. "You can run like the wind—and I guess you'd better! We could fly on in the chariots but I've got to get back and warn the Lords of Light; see if they can put that thing on 'hold'.

"But—all right then! Who'll go with the Sawhorse? to carry the word."

Here Button Bright twirled his new straw hat rind whistled significantly.

"Good boy!" commended his 'queen'. "I'm sorry his saddle's not available. You'll just have to hold on round his neck for dear life. It won't be comfortable. Can you cope?"

Yes, he could cope. Perhaps to his surprise the boy found himself capable of anything, just to please the red sorceress.

The pair were off in a blast of red-green divots from the lawn. The others watched them go. "Anyway those two aren't going to care about a lack of conversation on the journey," laughed the Good Witch. Then she urged those remaining to reboard the chariots without delay and they too were off with a mighty flap of wings into the south. Yes, south was at least still south.

Ex-corporal Nutt watched them out of sight with a puzzled expression. "Now let me think," she said; "who might they have been?"

Glinda had a long conference by telephone with the Grand Master of the Lords of Light. The Lords promised to go on across-the-board alert. Not a soul would leave the Castle of Light while the emergency prevailed. Turf would be torn up and the vast underground mega-magnets, not used once in a generation, nay, once in a century, exposed and primed for instant action should it be necessary. If the Lords, who could control revolutions of the earth and, for a need, bring off eclipses of the sun and moon, could not deal with a tiny satellite no bigger than a billiards table it would be a serious blot on their scutcheon.

Somewhat reassured, Glinda set herself to pore over the Great Book of Records all night long, searching for any tiniest reference to what Corporal Margaret Nutt might have done with

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a battered orange mattress and all that it contained any time in the previous seven years.

Meanwhile at the Emerald City the Palace of Magic was turned upside down—or anyway front-to-back. (Reread chapter one; only this time the whole routine took place on a croquet pitch.) The celebrities were all discussing the situation (of which, this time, they were not unforeshadowed) nineteen to the dozen as the sun sank luridly in what had been the east. Then the Sawhorse and his rider dashed up.

“Oh, thank heavens, Lignum!” cried the dainty Girl Ruler throwing down her mallet. “Please don’t let me let you go away again! I may need you any time at a moment’s notice—” But here she broke off to give Button Bright first aid. ‘The boy was ashen: both from road dust and extreme exhaustion. His new straw hat and one shoe were missing.

“Lemonade!” he gasped and fell in a faint.

As it happened Princess Trot had set up a lemonade stand beside the playing field so help was on its way in a moment. “Give him some popcorn too” urged Princess Betsy who was managing *that* concession. “He always eats twice the amount whenever he is out of order.”

Lemonade and popcorn soon revived the youth. His urgent message was delivered and they all trooped off to the View Room to consult the wonderful Magic Picture.

“You do the honors, Scraps!” whispered Queen Ozma urgently, and the Patchwork Girl intoned;

“Great magic picture on the wall,
You’ve got your audience in thrall.
Now show us what we want to see:
Where can the Magic Mirror be?!”

Strictly speaking, the crowd was not an ‘audience’, since the magic picture never *said* anything. Still, it got the idea and the conventional landscape scene on the canvas melted to reveal ... a totally black surface!

“Or else a very very very dark brown,” said Button Bright when faced with the puzzling scene, and became quite

thoughtful.

All the rest burst into tears, or very nearly. "Oh, Ozma, what does it mean?" wept Betsy.

"Just that the mirror - and perhaps the mattress as well—is in a very dark place. I'm afraid we have no other clue."

"And that means..?" prompted Trot.

"That there is no way to operate on that swiftly approaching satellite *magically*. As I understand it, the flying 'tea-tray' has a cathode relationship to the little magic hand-mirror. It reacts to magic impulses, but only from its positive pole, the small mirror."

"And then *that* means?" urged Princess Dorothy in her turn.

"That we're powerless!" Ozma almost wailed. "All we can do is wait and see what happens. Maybe the space mirror will fly on by, and out of Earth's gravity field. Then things will go back to normal."

"And if it doesn't?" asked the Wizard of Oz. But he knew better than his ruler what the awful effect would be. Ozma at once deferred to him and he explained to the group gathered before the black picture - which gradually faded back to its accustomed green rolling landscape scene, to everyone's relief.

"The satellite," said Oz, "will go into orbit round the earth. It would be a bit too coincidental if it were to assume a speed exactly complementary to that of the rotation of the earth. No, it will be

moving faster or else slower than the earth's rotation. The rest of the planet is of course impervious to the action of a magically motivated mirror but every time the glass passes over Oz it will reverse all our directions here, make us mirror images of ourselves, unable to read our own handwriting. In fact, we won't know whether we're coming on or going," he ended verily with a lapse into the vernacular.

"Oh, hove dreadful," gasped in awe more than one voice.

Radio consultation with the Sorceress of the South and the Lords of Light was held. Then the palace settled down in a grim emergency mood to await developments.

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All except Button Bright. He “disappeared” as usual. That is to say, without bothering to say goodbye to anybody he set out to walk back to Queen Glinda’s pink palace.

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

"Oh, how lovely!" said Ozma of Oz.

She and the Wizard and the Royal Historian were gathered in the cupola atop the Wimugiqua Hotel, which, unlike the music room at the palace or, curiously enough, even the lower level of the Wizard's study-cum-observatory, looked out to all directions. Ozma hadn't wanted to perch on the end of the Wizard's telescope to get a far horizon view to every side, and anyway she wanted Frank in on their deliberations so the two royal-palace denizens had hopped in the red wagon and driven over before sun-up.

What was lovely (in Ozma's opinion, and that counted for something!) was the distant view of Winkle wheat fields dark golden under the dawn sun. The fairy ruler had loved the golden east since it first appeared to her seven years before. To be truthful, she had missed it. This was her first sight of it since then.

"It is rather fine," the Royal Historian had to admit.

"I've often pondered on the Oz color scheme," confessed the Wizard. "Is it known how those particular colors became identified with the particular regions?"

"Probably picked out of a hat - or off the top of somebody's head," opined the Historian, "without any thought behind it at all."

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But actually the Wizard's question had been directed at Ozma, who might be expected to retain traces of family memory of ancient lore. Had possibly some old forebear of hers decreed it? But all she said was; "Lurline once told me that the Emerald country for ages lay under a vast lake and when it was drained everything growing up from the rich muck of the former lake bottom remained an emerald green.

"As for the rest of the country: since Oz lies in the northern hemisphere, red somehow seems suitable for the land of the 'hot' south. Contrariwise, perhaps violet is appropriately 'cool' for the north - though blue would have seemed even more appropriate.

"And as regards the western yellow and eastern blue, well, you know I feel they're backwards. But just at the moment the colors are right!" And she fell to joying again, her elbows propped on the cupola railing.

Alas, her enjoyment was short-lived. Even as they watched, the far eastern vista sicklied over and turned green and at the same time there was a greening of the west. In half an hour the transformation was complete, Munchkinland was in the east—and they could all read again! They understood that the enchanted tea-tray had flown on ahead out of range of reflection of Oz.

"It's pretty awful, isn't it?" asked Ozma rhetorically. Everyone in Oz was well aware, by now, how awful it was; not to be able to read a newspaper or find your way home—since all orientation was haywire. "It wouldn't be nearly so bad if it just *stayed* reversed," the ruler went on. "In time we could all adapt to that. What matter if directions are backwards in the eyes of the outside world? Our dealings with that outside world are almost non-existent anyway. But it's this awful switching every time the glass passes over Oz and exerts its influence...

"Wizard, is it quite certain the thing has gone into orbit around the earth?" "I'm afraid so, my dear. It appears to do about three revolutions of the earth in twenty-four Hours, so we get the reversals once each morning and afternoon and once in the

middle of the night. It's not exact, of course. It's a *little* faster than three times a day, so the reversals creep a little forward, so we get them a few minutes earlier each time than on the day before—"

"Thanks for small mercies!" laughed Ozma.

"At least the satellite turned out to be going *faster* than the earth turns. The Lords of Light will probably be able to cope with that. Glinda's long since alerted them. Actually I'm surprised the magnets haven't begun to take effect before this. But then I've no idea how they operate or how difficult it may be to slow down a speeding 'heavenly body'. But imagine if the tea-tray had been going *slower* than the earth... ! "

"It would eventually have fallen *to* earth," asserted the Wizard.

"Yes, but after how many years? and with this directions-reversal meanwhile happening thrice daily. We'd all have gone mad before it had time to fall. No, it's better this way. The Lords will 'fix' the satellite just over Oz, where it will go into orbit round the earth at exactly the speed of the earth's rotation. Like the moon, you know; always turning its same face to the earth, although both planets are revolving in several different directions at once."

"Too bad the tray couldn't be fixed over Timbuctoo," commented the Historian, "or the South Pole, where it wouldn't have any effect."

"But then *we* couldn't have any effect on *it* when the magic control mirror turns up—as it's sure to do eventually. No, the temporary—but at least not oscillatory!—directions reversal will be a trial, but with the magic mirror—eventually - we can direct the reflector mirror out of the sky once and for all."

"A long-range anti-aircraft battery might come in useful now," suggested Frank, who remembered reports of such devices during the World War.

"Oh, gracious!" exclaimed the fairy princess, "you shock me, R.H. How terribly alien any such thing, would be to a fairyland like Oz."

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

The Lords of Light did their work, and well. The magic-marked reflector mirror took up its position in the heavens, hanging forever just over the Emerald City though invisible to all except those who happened to have access to either of the city's two observatory telescopes on a cloudless night.

The reversal of the magic country's directions, and everything being its own mirror image, disturbed people frightfully for a time. Then they got used to it and forgot about it, to the extent that they even failed to mention it in private writings or historical chronicles or even when strangers came to visit from the great world outside. People like young "Speedy" or Handy Mandy, the seven-armed girl or Bennie, the statue of the Public Benefactor, when arriving from the United States or elsewhere, did a double take when they saw folks reading, like Arabs, from right to left. But they too soon grew accustomed and felt, besides, that the backwardsness added an extra dimension of enchanted differentness to life in the magic land.

Peter, the boy from Philadelphia, felt it too. For him there was one curiosity more in Oz. He was, you see, not the only "boy from Philadelphia" who had visited the fairyland and the exploits of his neighbor, Master Bright, a generation before were still celebrated in that quarter of the City of Brotherly Love. When

Peter came to Oz they could give him no news of Button Bright and that was disappointing.

"Oh, Button's always disappearing," explained Princess Dorothy airily in 1927. Then she grew thoughtful. "But it HAS been rather a time now. Ozma," she called to her sovereign, who was deciding cases on the other side of the courtyard, "when was Button Bright here last?"

"Three years ago, dear," returned the little judge. Then, when she had handed down a verdict in the last case and adjourned the court, she joined her young friends. "We've always assumed he went back to the States again," she informed Peter.

"Well, if he did he didn't go to Philadelphia. If he had I'd have known about it."

"That is a little odd," admitted Ozma.

"I tell you: shall we have a look in the Magic Picture'?"

That was always a treat and the troop of young people moved indoors gladly and made their way to the Room With a View. "Scraps?" spoke Ozma in what had become almost a tradition when consulting the work of art.

The Patchwork Girl was just fifteen and well to be counted among 'the young people'. She took her place before the picture and pronounced;

"Our Button Bright's been long away.

We wonder where he is.

Great Magic Picture on the wall:

We pray you; show his phiz."

The green scene faded and became—black. There was a shocked silence. Then, "Or else a very very very dark brown," quoted the Patchwork Girl solemnly, remembering. Quickly Ozma caused the picture to erase the sable spectacle. She didn't want anyone picking out, after all, any details in the apparently undifferentiated darkness of the scene.

"Oh, my dears," she breathed in deep distress. "I'm terribly much afraid... our Button Bright's... dead—and buried."

The girls all burst into tears and even Peter felt like crying, realizing now just how much he'd looked forward to compar-

ing notes with his older colleague. It seemed clear that the other Philadelphian had, after all, left Oz, then met with some accident before regaining home ground. He had apparently gained *some* ground, but where it might be was anyone's guess.

Ozma declared a week of national mourning and the incident cast a pall over the whole wind-up of young Peter's adventures with the Gnome King. Sorceress Glinda when she got the news declared a *month* of mourning for the pink palace, the Ruby City and the whole land of the Quadlings. She herself almost went into a decline.

'That poor, silly—utterly charming boy, she thought. Then she knew that she had long nursed a wish that Button Bright might live to grow up, and be a fitting intellectual companion for her who was often, despite—or, more likely, because of—her lofty position, alone. She and Button Bright had just simply *liked* each other so much, indeed *admired* and if their mental—and apparent—ages had ever drawn closer together, what good companions they might have been.

The sorceress thought she'd like to send a wreath and she did a minutely careful check back over all Great Book entries for the previous three years to try to determine where the boy's grave might be. There was nothing but the maddeningly terse notice, "Button Bright has gone to earth" —which might mean anything. She was, however, astonished at how early the report appeared; seemingly a scant fortnight after he had last been seen, on the occasion of the failed mission to ascertain where the magic mirror might be.

Glinda tried to picture what might have happened. The unpredictable youth, having no good news—or, really, any news at all—to bring back to his eager associates at, or near, the pink palace, had—well, not in shame, surely—wandered away as he was very wont to do. But what then. Nothing all that bad could happen to him in Oz. Ergo, he must have left Oz. But how?

Then the witch had a brilliant inspiration: the magic umbrella.

Button Bright's travel-worthy talisman had been missing since his abortive journey to Mo in 1915. There had not been the

faintest clue as to what might have happened to it. The feckless lad had indeed never given a proper account of where he was heading when the umbrella slipped his grip; otherwise one might have looked for it at or near the planned destination. Had it fallen down, like the boy himself, in Mo, beyond the belt of deserts? Or, if not, where?

This was where Glinda had her bright idea. The boy himself had known where he was going with the umbrella. Now, foot-loose and with no plans, might it not have occurred to him to go to that old one-time destination (presumably within Oz, a country Button Bright knew and liked) and look for the lost bumbershoot? He had done so! and been successful! Then gormlessly he had flown off with the umbrella to some more lethal land and there met with a dire fate.

The explanation satisfied the sorceress' meticulous mind—but not her heart.

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

Time sped away. Enchanted and enchanting things kept happening in Oz. Jack Pumpkinhead had some rousing adventures among robber barons. Knighthood flowered! A series of young boys, from in and out of Oz, drew attention to themselves by means of the unlikely events they took part in. Some of the most neglected of the yearly chronicles of Oz got written in the period. Horses proliferated; Oz being short on those splendid animals, stock was brought in from beyond the deserts and even from beyond the stars. Then, when Ozites attempted to go beyond the stars themselves, people got restive.

If the Wizard of Oz and others were going to rocket off—heaven knew where in heaven!—and while they were at it not even bother to pick off that pesky ‘tea-tray’ in the sky, that continued to play such hob, then people would much prefer that such people confine .their activities to earth and, more specifically, to Oz.

Incredible things began to happen. the very houses in the Emerald City became alive and staged pitched battles. Modern technology swept over the land, bringing with it a fleet of quasi-automobiles. Finally, when a whale decided to visit Oz, whose largest body of water would fill a bath-tub to overflowing, belief was at last suspended and no more was heard of the magic

land for a time.

Things continued to take place there, however. Frederick Fruakx went on traveling with his old-time road show. His erst-while companion Cayke the cookie cook moved in with the Orangespiegels but declined to become Mrs. Orangespiegel because, as she reminded her ardent admirer, he “knew where her heart was”. By the same token Levimeyerabloch and Mistress Fill did not wed though the warmest of friends, for, as *she* pointed out, she might one day be obligated to resume duties as housekeeper to her brother—if Cayke should at last decide to go where her heart was. Meanwhile the two couples enjoyed all the amenities of a ménage

à quatre at the orange spherodome, and the brothers-in-spirit (if not -law) quite forgot their ancient and passing enmity.

As for the Woozy and his pal the Sawhorse!: one day in early 1943 the Woozy said to his stable-mate, “Aw, come on, Lignum, let’s go off for an adventure somewhere, just the two of us. We haven’t been anywhere together in eighteen years!”

To his surprise the Sawhorse replied, “What did you have in mind?”

In eighteen—or twenty-five—years the Woozy hadn’t learned to predict the unpredictable Sawhorse. He didn’t see that answer to his oft-repeated suggestion coming and he was caught off base. He stammered, “Well—er.” Then the memory of the last time he had stammered that, in a similar situation, a quarter of a century before, came to him and he said, “Let’s recreate our walking tour to Witch Glinda’s! Remember what fun we had then?!”

“Okay,” followed through the Sawhorse. “We’ll just let the Girl Ruler know.”

“That’ll be Princess Ozma,” affirmed the Woozy.

“That’s the one. Come on!” and away dashed the two animals to Ozma’s salon where the fairy was sharing a cold collation with her girl friends.

“Well, Lignum,” said she, “I did vow once I’d never let you out of my sight again. But after all I mustn’t be too strict. All

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right. Off you go—and have fun, you two!”

They did. The Woozy browsed on buttercups and thistles and talked to the Sawhorse. Getting no reply, on the second day of their outing he talked to himself. On the third day there was no talk. Still, they were enjoying their togetherness and seeing a lot of pleasant landscape and getting a lot of fresh air.

On the fourth day, somewhat to the Woozy’s relief, they fell in with Fred Fruakx’s traveling carney. “Oh, delight!” cried the square animal when he recognized at the reins of the lead wagon the famed and familiar Frogman. “Someone to talk to! This will be fun.”

And it was. Besides the frog, with whom the strolling travelers exchanged happy greetings, they renewed acquaintance with the celebrated and very capable clown Mr. Notta Bit More and his young friend, Bob Up, who had long been traveling with the mini-circus. The carney crowd declared a holiday and though they put up the tents (to sleep in) they didn’t bark (or croak) to attract customers but just spent the rest of the day reminiscing with the arrivals from the Emerald City.

They talked of everything under the sun—except just one thing; that was too painful. Then as evening drew on Mr. Fruakx said, “Why don’t you two mosey on with us for a while? You’re not going anywhere in particular, are you?”

The four-footed pair said “Yes!” and “No” with considerable enthusiasm. So it was done. Now the Woozy and the Sawhorse had more fun than ever. The former could converse as much as he liked and the latter could omit to converse, as much as *he* liked.

The two had been on the way eight days when the caravan came over a rise one noonday and spied the treacle well where the animals had had a small adventure in olden times.

“Oh, dear,” said the Woozy and had a pang. “Remember poor Button Bright?”

This was the sad topic they had all been carefully avoiding. Everyone knew Bob Up and Button Bright had been best friends.

Bob had grieved the longest and strongest of anyone in Oz

when the Philadelphian's final fate had been ascertained. He wouldn't believe it. It was at his urging that he and Notta had left their comfortable little house on the outskirts of the Emerald City and joined the traveling show when the invitation came. Still now, so many years later, Bob Up never rose in the morning without hoping that *this* would be the day they would arrive somewhere where he would get news of his friend and what had happened to him.

"Yes, I remember," he said and wiped away a furtive tear. "I wonder why you mention him now."

Then the Woozy told the story of their encounter at the well on a happier day.

As he spoke, the whole party had drawn solemnly nearer the well-head and now they took off their hats, if they had any, and gazed gravely down into the darkness, thinking elegiac thoughts.

Suddenly, "I thought I saw something move!" grasped Notta Bit More.

"Impossible," snorted the Frogman. "What could move—or live—in the bottom of a well of molasses?"

"Just the same," insisted the clown. "Bob! Don't you see something? Like a faint reflection of light on a slick dark surface...?"

"Gosh, Notta, I can't be sure."

The upshot was that they lowered the well bucket just to see if it brought a reaction from anything living, and moving, amidst the molasses. They all stared down with tense attention, but they couldn't see a thing. But! they heard something.

A terribly hoarse voice, scarcely able to articulate, growled, "H-e-' p-m-e-e..." —and died away.

"Oh, horrors!" cried the Woozy. "It's a person."

Then they all got feverishly busy. The Frogman leapt away to the tent wagon after ropes and the slim athletic clown grasped the frayed well rope and began shinnying down - while all the rest lent enormous moral support. He didn't get very far, though. In a moment Notta's syrup-daubed face reappeared and he

grunted, "The rope breaks off! Get me outta here."

But now arrive the roustabouts, trundling a traveling capstan which they prop against the well's brick-work, and then Notta goes down again.

Soon his voice was heard: "I think it's a man! Yes, a negro—What?... " Some form of converse seemed to be going on in the very very dark brown depths. "No, not a negro! But definitely a man... Can you get hold of this loop? Here, I've got your wrist... What about another rope up there?! Make a draw-noose in it if you can..."

In a moment the noose, well anchored above, was thrown down and Notta juggled it into position under the man's arms. Then he hung onto his own rope and, now more black than white himself, watched the well-grown male form rise slowly, painfully, out of the sable ooze.

Gracious, what a pitiful sight it was. They all got sticky helping to haul the man over the coping. Then as he sank down against the brick-work they got a good look at him.

The fellow seemed to be dressed in some rags of old clothes obviously far too tiny for him. The whole form was, however, decently covered in a thick layer of black brown tar. It was impossible to make out anything of his features or natural coloring but he was clearly a well-developed but gaunt man of thirty or thirty-five. The travelers all stared in awe and nobody spoke.

It was the winsome Woozy who first put out a square but smooth warm tongue and licked the fellow's knee. At that the rescuee uttered a gurgle which - amazingly enough—they all interpreted as a sound of pleasure. "That's nice," he slowly uttered. "Doitsomemore. .. It'slikeoldtimes."

"Old times'?" echoed a voice or so in astonishment, and then the Frogman vouchsafed to ask; "Who—who are you, good man?"

A moment's silence and then a voice full of regret and nostalgia, as well as molasses, said, "Theyusedtocallme... ButtonBright."

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

When they succeeded in getting the long-lost boy/man detreaclefied, clothed, and in his right mind, and themselves over their utter astonishment, this was the tale they heard;

Button Bright had set out from the Emerald City in 1924 with the vague intention of making his way back to the palace of 'his "Queen"' in Quadlinga. Even a feckless free and easy youth like him could occasionally be blue and Button was so now because his all-out race to the capital had produced nothing useful to his friends. Princess Ozma's need of her steed had even deprived him of a conveyance and a companion.

It was not Button Bright's custom to make much stir when he arrived or departed from anywhere. In fact some people might say it was downright rude the way he got up from the dinner table one evening at the Palace of Magic and wandered out into the night without saying a word to anybody. He followed some dancing fireflies until they got near a gate in the garden wall. A gate suggested going through it. When he did, a dark lane rich with the scent of overripe lilacs suggested going along it, so he did that too.

By morning he was miles from the Emerald City and he dived into a straw stack and slept there all day. A week later he had regained (by no means walking as fast as he could all the time)

the place where he had parted from his friends. There was of course no trace of them to be seen on the lawn before the cottage of Nut Meg, the ex-corporal of the palace guard. Nor was there much sense in asking; Meg which way they had gone.

Still, some quixotic notion of courtesy, or else just a pang of loneliness and/or hunger, made him knock at her door. He remembered Nut Meg's seed cakes.

"Hello, there," said the corporal. "Come on in. I was expecting you."

This was news to the boy. He was not to know that the remark was one of the gambits used by the woman, who was well aware of her missing memory, to conceal her lack thereof.

"Now let's see," said Meg as she set before her visitor lemonade and popcorn (some things she still had an unerring sense about), "where did we meet last?" (Another gambit.)

Button Bright fell into her little social trap willingly. "Why, right here! You remember:" (this cleverly flattered his hostess, who of all things in the world was least capable of that act) "we were searching for an old mattress."

"What fun!" remarked the grey-haired woman brightly. "And how did that quest turn out?"

Button had to reveal that the turning-out had been zilch. "The tragic Picture didn't show a thing — It was just black... or else a very very very dark brown."

"How unfortunate," commiserated the corporal. "And that's all? No further clues turned up?"

"None. So I left there. And then I came here."

"The best thing you could have done, really."

Meg was not unperceptive; she was merely near-amnesial. She had noticed the straw stems and grass stains here and there about the lad. Now she said, "I'll bet you'd enjoy a night in a real bed for a change..."

Button Bright agreed that he would. They passed a pleasant evening together and he had the comfortable night. Next morning he rose refreshed and lively. Life looked not so blue any longer but rather (as a glance out the window confirmed) rose-

colored.

He was, you know, in the red land of the Quadlings.

The company and kindness had done the trick. When he took his leave of Nut Meg and went on his way whistling, he was more or less the old casual careless curious Button Bright again.

Half a mile further on he came past the treacle well and a gust of recognition and nostalgia seized him. How amusing it had been the last time he was there! Like most boys he had a bit of a sweet tooth and he'd always enjoyed a dollop of syrup with his scrapple. But how unfortunate! As he had leaned over and reached down to get a lick his hat had fallen off. Good thing his friends the Sawhorse and the Woozy had happened along just then!

But, goodness! how black it had been down in that well. Black — or else a very very very dark brown!...

A sudden flash of intuition struck the youth. He left the path and ran across to the well head to peer down. He even remembered to take off his hat and lay it on the grass. A bitter wind blew it away the next November.

He had to know for sure. It was so very dark in the well and nothing whatever could be seen down there. But what a triumph if he were to be able to haul up mattress and magic mirror and all! and arrive a hero at the palace of his queen.

Expertly he lowered the bucket rope to its fullest extent, then making sure that the winch was solid and secure, he grasped the cord and began to lower himself down. No blithe sailing down head foremost this time. Too much was at stake.

But, alas, after so many years — and after all who ever tended the well? — the rotten old rope broke and the boy was pitched into the viscous mass at the bottom.

Now the feckless fellow knew terror. Not of smothering in syrup. That would have been sharp pain and passion — and then nothing.

No, worse luck, this was Oz and he could know the pain and the fear but not the nothing. He would live on forever in the bottom of a well, hideously uncomfortable but not in the slight-

est physical danger. Even: molasses were reputed by some to be the perfect hundred per-cent food, so he shouldn't even need to feel hunger pangs. Just terrible boredom and discomfort.

The first week in the well Button Bright thought he would lose his mind. Hope was still there and the waiting for someone to come to the well and find him. After a week he knew no one would ever come, and that despite the fact that the well was not so very far off a public, though admittedly little used, footpath. You did have to be looking for the well to notice it.

When he knew that, he took stock of himself and his situation. His friend Glinda was not there to see it but that day Button Bright grew up. He fought a silent unmoving battle in the dark. And he won. He set his mind into a neutral gear, as it were, and his body to hibernate, also as it were, and he became as a bear or a badger in its winter den. But his winter lasted for many years.

Unconscious thus, Button Bright had no opportunity to perform the tiny daily ritual for preventing aging, hence he grew up, also physically, in the well. The treacle-logged sailor suit he wore split at every seam and became a meaningless rag.

The situation knew no change for more than eighteen years. The stars—and also a single 'tea-tray'—moved across the heavens in their unchanging courses and no one ever knew.

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

They got him to the Emerald City. The Frogman took charge. He it was who directed the traveling midway's roustabouts and got a hook lowered on the windlass to draw up out of the treacle well the decomposed remains of the orange-ticked (but you couldn't see that!) mattress that Corporal Nutt had flung there in a moment of irresponsible aberration a quarter of a century before.

Young Bob Up volunteered for the dreadful task of probing the syrup-logged mattress for the magic mirror which one Till Orangespiegel had stuffed through a hole in the ticking in a coconut grove on a long-past afternoon. There was every chance that the mirror would be broken, nay, cracked in a hundred shivers, after all the chops and changes the mattress had been through. But so what? They'd already had their seven years' bad luck - and more than three times that.

Still, the glass *was* forged-silver-backed — and no doubt case-hardened — after the magicizing ordeal by fire it had undergone. It would appear that that was how it was, for on the fourth plunge of Bob's arm into the grisly substance of the former mattress he drew out the round mirror, no bigger than a man's hand, intact. They brought water and scrubbed the glass and the it gleamed again as of old.

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The mattress was given decent burial and then they set out for the capital. The travelers took turns sitting with the rescued one in a swaying house-wagon. They all had a feeling he should be reintroduced to lived life gently. Bob Up was touching in his devotion although the boy he had known and loved was gone and in his place a total stranger. Notta the clown was Saladin von Smith's contemporary in outward appearance of age now and indeed they spoke together cordially. But it was Fred Fruakx the Frogman who, with their shared recollections of ancient adventures, seemed closest to the revived man.

"Mr. Fruakx—" said von Smith one morning as they were crossing into the Emerald country, "Fred... "

"Call me 'Fritz' if you like," said the Frogman heartily. "That's the name Orangespiegel took to using for me—in his Low-German way. It's German for 'Fred'."

"'Fritz'," said von Smith thoughtfully. "I like it."

"I do too."

Then, "Fritz—I want to leave Oz." The man announced it calmly and without omsweep.

"Ah-hh." The frog let out a long low croak of disappointment—and understanding.

"Oz is for children," went on von Smith. "I'm not a child any more."

"No more am I," contributed Fruakx.

"Ah, but you're from—and of—Oz. I'm not. Oh, it's all right for childlike foreigners, like the Shaggy Man—"

"What about Oz Diggs, the Wizard?" suggested the Frogman.

"He's got his magic, that makes him belong. I haven't got a thing. I want to go home—and acquire something: an education for starters."

The Frogman came with other objections and alternatives. But it was no good. The man brought back from a syrupy grave had his reasons and his intentions and they were fixed. And Fritz Fruakx did understand.

When they got to the royal green palace and before the scenes

of frantic—but melancholy—rejoicing at the prodigal’s return were fairly past, they told Queen Ozma.

In her private sitting room, where only the Wizard besides was present, the queen said, “I see... We’ll be so sorry to see you go. Oz has been your home for so long now.”

“Oh, what a home,” said the man wryly, “—at least in the last few years. But that’s nobody’s fault but my own. Now I have a craving to go back—and see if I can do something right for once.”

“Can we arrange it, Wizard?” The princess turned to her chief counselor.

“Oh, yes, I think so,” said the savant. “The same procedure as when Peter used to go back to Philadelphia—”

“You’ll be going back to Philadelphia, I expect?” said the fairy ruler.

“Yes,” agreed von Smith. “That will be one of the treats—I guess—seeing the old place again.”

“Be prepared for changes,” warned the Wizard. “I understand the city is—darker than it was.”

“As who is not?!” jested the treacled traveler.

Indeed, it was so. The molasses seemed to have entered into Button Bright’s soul—or anyway into his pigmentation. Where the child Button Bright had been the lightest blond, the man was swarthy of skin and his hair exactly the color of sorghum syrup. “‘Button *Bright*’,” said the fellow with a scoff. “That name will have to go.”

And so did the man himself.

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

Then the orchestra struck up in a major key; a merry climbing rondo, and people rubbed their hands and prepared to get things done.

"So it's back to the Governor of your Orange Province, your grace?" asked the Wizard of Oz next morning at breakfast.

"The Ruler of the Unnikegs, you mean?" riposted Ozma with a smile. The uncouth name was one she had made up herself and she was rather proud of it.

That enormously long, enormously thin sliver of orange lying along the former border between the Winkie and Quadling countries had in a quarter century actually become a little country of its own. Admittedly the inhabitants had not formerly been a homogeneous tribe nor did they now have anything but their unrequested orangeness to bind them together. Yet bind them it did. There was nothing painful about the condition; only, when one orange man ran into an other he would say, "You too?" — as survivors of an earthquake or tidal wave might sense a springing fellowship as a result of what they had been through together.

The feeling grew generally until one day a deputation of orangemen arrived at Princess Ozma's palace and lodged a request. "We're orangemen," said their leader, who was also

something of a wit and a history buff. "We don't actually care less about William or James," he said arcanelly, "but we do feel like we belong together in the never-land. We'd like to have something to call ourselves besides 'orangemen'. Then we could go ahead and be a nation."

"I'll take it under consideration," promised the gracious queen.

That same evening she got busy with a pencil and a sheet of paper. What name could you give to a people who had nothing in common but the fact of sharing in the effects of an accidental visitation of magic? The word "orangemen" which had sprung up in the folk mouth was the only *natural* thing you could call them. But that was so un-Ozian and at the same time reminiscent of bygone and meaningless strifes out in the great world that Ozma decided against perpetuating it.

No, a name that exactly shared constituents of existing tribal names of Oz was what was wanted. Then nobody could say it was eccentric or didn't belong. It should be of the average length of, and composed of a choice of the same letters as, the four names familiar in Oz. Experimentally she wrote down:

WINKIE
MUNCHKIN
GILLIKIN
QUADLING

'Hm,' thought the princess, 'this is going to be fun.'

One six-letter name and three eight-. To arrive at anything like a synthesis as far as length was concerned, the new word ought only to consist of seven letters. Right: drop initial M, G, and Q, for anyway one wouldn't want to favor one region over another by reusing its initial.

Then, from what was left, select a letter from each column, spread as fairly as might be among the four names, to produce a word that was at least pronounceable. In half an hour Ozma had come up with "Unnikeg" — and thought it was the best she was likely to get.

The deputation, when she told them next day, were well

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satisfied. They took their new name and carried it home, happy. Now they had achieved nationhood. Ozma was amused on the occasion of her next royal progress through the Orange Slice to be shown the national coat of arms with its symbol of a barrel of honey (orange-blossom, of course) and to be told with all reverence that the totem of the Unnikegs was most ancient.

"Yes," said the Wizard. "I assume it must be Orangespiegel, its creator, who is to manipulate the magic mirror..?"

"As ably as he did the first time'?" spoke the princess ironically. "He should be present, of course. But no, I think we'd better not take any chances. We'll have all the Adepts of Magic in Oz who will come: ourselves, Glinda, Diane—the Witch of the North that was, the wizard Wam, and everyone else credited as an Adept. Oh, and the Lords of Light standing by, though they aren't, strictly speaking, magicians. Among us we ought to get the thing done somehow.

"And yet..."

"Yes, your grace?" The Wizard raised his eyebrows.

"I'm actually quite sorry it has to happen," said the Girl Ruler: "the deactivating of the enchanted glass that turns us all to our mirror images. It's been a good time for Oz, these 'years of the enchantment': —the twenties and thirties, as they are known out in the world. They haven't been a *result*, naturally, of the image reversal but the two phenomena have coincided and Oz has had a fresh youthful light-hearted air this quarter-century. Don't breathe a word of this to Frank but there was a slight atmosphere of emptiness and gloom about Oz in the first years of the century. All those threatening armies! of gnomes and fanfasms and even Ozites, including young ladies. All those evil witches and Kalidahs and devouring wolves...

"That's all gone now. Our worst threats lately have been from single ill-natured individuals, who, however, never succeeded in depressing the entire country. But now I fear," said the fairy, who sometimes had mild seizures of second-sight, "the old bad times may return—with truly evil enchanter putting a hex on Oz. Perhaps even grand-scale air wars or attacks from outer

space. When you've got a nice system ticking over peacefully and everyone content, there'll always be somebody come along, keen to destroy it all..." A little frown of foreboding was on her brow.

"Still, I suppose it's our duty...?"

"Well," said the Wizard, "there have been those irate letters from the F.L.O.P."

"The Federated League of Oz Purists," translated Ozma. "Yes, they've been up in arms for twenty years. I can't say I sympathize all that much with them. If they had their way Oz would be frozen in amber the way it was at the end of Dorothy's first adventure here. Even I would never have been invented," laughed the fairy ruefully. "I must take a dim view of that."

"I suppose you could just keep the retrieval of the mirror a secret," said the Wizard doubtfully.

"No, that's just what we couldn't—now. The discovery was made—perhaps unfortunately—too publicly. The Frogman and his bunch have already left and they'll spread the story wherever they appear. I can't ask the people here at the palace to conceal the news from their pen-pals. And Glinda has already been informed..."

No, as happens more than one would think: those concerned went ahead and co-operated in their own downfall. Perhaps it had nothing to do with the restoration of the ancient orientation of directions in Oz but it is a curious fact that from this time no more news of the magic land reached the outside world for many years. And when it did, somehow it wasn't the old Oz.

"How will you travel?" enquired the Royal Historian when the final decision to act had been made.

"Might as well use these Scalawagons, now that they've been invented," said Princess Ozma with resignation. She and her advisers were up in the dome of the Wimugiqua Hotel to watch the sun rise for the last time over the golden East. "The others will be arriving from the north during the morning and then we'll set out. We can be there in just three hours by Scalawagon."

There was silence for a while as they observed the midnight

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blue lightening to ultramarine and then azure. The sun slid up like a great gold coin and the fields of mustard they were growing that year, by crop rotation, in the nearer reaches of the Winkie country gleamed out most yellowly.

“Isn’t it magnificent?!” exclaimed Ozma, enthralled, and hummed a little tune in her delight.

“What’s that you’re humming, your grace?” asked the Wizard of Oz.

“Why...I don’t know,” said the girl. “Some popular love song, I suppose. Let’s see...” She tried to recapture the words: “‘I love you... the golden dawn agrees—’ There, you see? it’s psychological! The land of morning *should* be gold. It seems like the obvious thing.

“By the way, speaking of pop songs: I learn that at this moment out in the great world a song at the top of the charts is called ‘In the Blue of Evening’! For the west *is* every bit as blue as the east is yellow. But now, alas...”

They had no time to listen to more of the fairy’s foolishness. The Wizard and Queen Ozma took leave of the Historian and went to the garages to see that all was in readiness for the early afternoon departure.

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

"Take that! and that!" Cayke slapped her house-mate's face, then threw a pot at his noodle and began to chase him all around the room. But he was not such a dumbbell so he ran like mad, but stumbled on a broom, and that really was his doom. She started swinging; left! right!

After all, they had been together for more than eighteen years and it was enough to get on anyone's nerves. Orangespiegel *would* enter her kitchen and tell her how to cook and if there was one thing the cookie cook didn't support it was that. 'Anyone would think we were married, the way he tries to rule the roost,' she thought in annoyance as she flopped herself down at the kitchen table after the flare-up and gulped at a cup of Skim.

She was crying when Mistress Pill stepped in from the garden. "What's the matter, dear? May I know?"

"Oh, it's your brother again! I suppose the poor man hasn't got enough to occupy him. After all, bossing these Unnikegs isn't a full-time occupation. He will come in here and try to rationalize my housekeeping. It makes me see red. And of course that starts *him* off—because he only wants me to see orange.. We've been having another of our quarrels."

"I'm so sorry to hear it." Pill herself never had a quarrel. Maybe the fact that *her* boy-friend was away for a month at a

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time had something to do with it. Or perhaps her character and that of Mr. Levimeyerabloch were just that little amount sweeter than in the combination Cayke/Till and that made the difference. Till always had been a driving man and the cookie cook too had shown traces of adamantite in her nature.

"That's the worst of being married," analyzed the cook. "Or rather: of not being married, though constantly together. You get on each other's nerves. I suppose there's never been, since the dawn of time, two people living always together who didn't bicker. It's human nature."

"And yet you love each other," soothed Pill.

"That's the odd part of it. We don't. At least: I made no secret from the start. I had a great love—once—but it wasn't granted me to keep. I thought if I couldn't be in love I could anyway be kind. But you know, I've found out; it's no good being altruistic and going with somebody out of kindness or pity—or gratitude for their devotion—or whatever. Their pride will never allow them to believe that. They'll think you chose them because you wanted to—and then they make you pay."

Pill Orangespiegel was shocked at the depth of disillusion revealed in her quasi-sister-in-law. But just then Till came bustling back into the kitchen as if nothing had happened.

"Excitement, girls!" he cried. "The Queen of Oz is coming to stay! Her and the once Witch of the North and Diggs -the Wizard and I don't know how many more. I can't think where we'll put them all!"

"Never mind that brother," said Pill, who read all the women's magazines. "The Princess—or the Wizard—always puts up a royal tent by magic if they're benighted anywhere. But why are they coming here?"

"Would you believe it?: my magic mirror has come to light -after all these years. And they're all coming down to confer with about putting to rights that pesky directions-switch that got started way back when—you remember the story—"

They did, all too well.

"Actually, I've been expecting the Queen to send for me any

time this past twenty years,” went on the vainglorious former Owl Practitioner. “but this is even better. She’s coming to me. I expect I’ll have to have a medal or two pinned on my lapel—”

“What for?” said the disenchanting Cayke.

“Why! for...” The O.P. paused to consider. “For mucking about with magic and *causing* the ‘pesky directions-switch’? Or for highhandedly turning part of the country orange? Or for being allowed, heaven knows why, to be governor of the area thus oranged over?!” Poor Cayke could not control her temper and her scorn for the meddler she had been with too long.

Where Orangespiegel had been able to overlook and forget a forthright pitched battle where both parties had been up in arms, he was wounded by this unkind reaction to a gambit he had meant only to thrill and please the women by. He took his sister under the arm and they went away to inspect the orange chamber and see about doing it out as a proper abode for the fairy Princess of Oz.

Cayke sat on at the table sombrely and remembered when she had been an easy-going young woman who could make people fall profoundly in love with her for her goodness. Nobody likely to do that today!

And yet; she *looked* no different from what she had done eighteen years earlier. The years in the desert had aged her only slightly, given her perhaps even a more fascinating depth to her glance or charming wryness to her smile. If someone could fall in love with her then, another someone might still do so—if he didn’t know what a shrew she had become. And she hated being a shrew. Oh, if only she could start over! But the spring: did that ever come a second time? And she thought of a pair of bright eyes.

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

"Yes, I think just here. Don't you, Glinda?" It was the girlish Ruler of Oz proposing, then gracefully leaving it to her older colleagues to dispose.

"Perfect, dear. What do you say, Lady Diane? Or would it be more in keeping to call you Tattypoo in this situation?"

The Countess (sometimes she styled herself 'Duchess') of Gillequin rested her chin in her hand and tapped her foot.

"'Tod' will do," she said abstractedly, "that's my port-manteau name. It includes, symbolically, all the others. No, somehow I think right in the exact center of the ground mirror would be more effective."

The others made no demur and all trailed after as Tod stepped some rods further north. There were seventeen of the more celebrated wonder-workers of Oz present, plus the measly little Till Orangespiegel who was only a dabbler in magic, though a remarkably effective one in view of the fact that a charm of his was the ultimate cause of this congress of necromancers. They formed a circle upon the great 'ground glass' that still lay in its place on the near-desert floor, gaudily reflecting the setting sun whose light was cast through the tall orange-glass standard.

"It's not Michaelmass," reminded the Wizard Oz Diggs. "The

reflection doesn't fall exactly athwart the glass. I wonder..."

"I think it's all right, Oz," reassured the Sorceress of the South. "It's not properly the orangeness which is at stake here—and there's *enough* of the orange that it will prevent the color's being inadvertently wiped off the landscape. But the big mirror is vital in making up the magic triangle."

Really they were all just reassuring themselves and each other that everything was going to go as wished. None of them had any experience of what they were about to attempt and even the one who had brought off the original enchantment was vague on procedures. His coup had been to all intents and purposes a fluke.

Ozma held a stop watch and when the optimum moment of maximum coloration of the ground mirror was at hand she said, "Go!" Till Orangespiegel, the center of the ring, unveiled the hand glass and the Wizards Oz and Wam held each an arm of him as he directed the mirror toward the sky, zeroing in on a point in the zenith where Glinda, employing an astrolabe, informed him that the reflecting 'tea-tray' hung invisible. The wizards knew by report how difficult the magic mirror was to control—or even to hang onto. The outer circle of witches, fairies, and enchanters plied their wands or forked twigs or whatever other magic gear they'd brought to the ceremony.

Sure enough, the little hand glass pulled and tugged and seemed to want to fly away to its glass-mate in the sky. There was no danger it was not keyed in to its counterpart! But was it going to have the desired effect and fetch its troublesome partner down from the heavens? Or might it not merely exacerbate what the tea-tray was doing already? perhaps turn Oz upside down as well as backwards? Nobody knew.

They waited for twelve minutes, while the three male magic-workers struggled to control the hand mirror and all the others incanted furiously. Some even took to wishing: those who controlled the power of making wishes come true. Then Tod, who had particularly keen eyesight, cried, "I think—yes, I *think* I see something!"

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It was the tea-tray mirror!

It wobbled, it shifted from side to side, seemingly fighting strenuously to resist the call to earth but every moment growing darker and bigger against the peerless evening-blue firmament. Vermillion flashed from it now, as its revolving mirror face caught the setting sun.

Soon even those whose eyesight was not perfect could see that an Oz-shaped oblong was tumbling fast and tumbling faster down the stairway from the stars. The orange flashes were every moment larger, sharper, and of shorter duration. The speeding bolt was gathering more speed. It was going to hit somewhere with a frightful 'ping'!

"Somewhere"?! Suddenly all the Adepts to a man (or woman) knew *where* it was going to hit. Glinda screamed, an event startling enough in itself coming from the usually calm sorceress: "You men!! drop that! Run for your lives!"

All the female Adepts in the outer ring had already rushed away to all sides and flung themselves cowering on the sands, anticipating Alamogordo. Now the three wizards scattered and took nose-dives. They had perhaps taken the red witch's injunction too literally, for the little magic hand mirror was left behind, lying somewhere on the surface of its great brother glass. It landed face up and continued to exercise its ineluctable pull on that vagrant member of the trio in the sky.

Two minutes and twenty-nine seconds of painful anticipation and then the magic-workers were stunned by a silver-tinkling smash as if all the chandeliers in the world had crashed at once. 'Cracked in a *million* shivers' the glass flew out in a vast cloud to all sides, each tiny facet reflecting the last rays of the dying sun in a great scintillating scarlet ball.

When the frightened sorcerers raised their heads they found themselves covered in orange sand. All trace of the three enchanted mirrors had disappeared, unless an increase in the amount of the desert's silica sand could be called a "trace".

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

"Well, that's that." Till Orangespiegel brushed his hands concludingly, then threw a last wave to Sorceress Glinda disappearing to the (yes, definitely) east in her swan chariot. "Went off very nicely," He smirked in satisfaction.

"Glad you think so, I'm sure," said the cookie cook with ill grace, dumping out a pan of dish-water, actually her old original jeweled dishpan which she had sent for early in her sojourn at the spherodome.

"And you do not, my pet?" Orangespiegel moved to the garden door leading to the kitchen.

"Oh, they were most kind and most condescending," Cayke had to admit. "But I wasn't charmed that Pill and I had to stay bent over a hot stove instead of taking part in the main event."

"But that was only for us Adepts of Magic," reminded her house-mate smugly. "Any layman's intrusion might have spoiled the spell."

"Hmfp." Cayke remembered a time when *her* adeptness with a magic rope had kept this strutting upstart in check. She still retained the rope—and her all-weather serape—in a trunk in the attic. Maybe She ought to have had them out, and impressed their guests with a display of magic lassoing while time was.

"Incidentally," pursued Till as they stepped inside and he

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shut the upper half of the Dutch door, "I suppose you overheard what Glinda said?"

"When? Just now? No, I was scouring the kitchen counters while you were with royalty in the drawing room. What did 'Glinda' have on her mind?"

"She was greatly impressed—well, all the Adepts were—at my 'coolness under fire' during the operation. It never crossed my mind to abandon my post until commanded to by the Good Witch. And I brought—well, we—the performance off with a bang—literally. There won't be any more crossed directions in Oz in future... I do regret my fine mirrors, rather. But then mirror-making is a concluded phase in my career now. I won't have time—"

"Why, what are you going to be doing?" Automatically Cayke was setting out the things for elevenses.

"You didn't hear that?! Why, Glinda thinks I'm so promising an apprentice in the magic arts that she's having me over to her workshops for a sabbatical year! I won't be seeing much of this place, and of course won't be available to tend the glass foundry.

"Oh, what a lark!" said Cayke ironically. "And what about the rest of us?"

"Oh, you'll just stay on here at the spherodome. It will be pleasant to see you again whenever I get back this way. Probably though my headquarters will be at E.C. I dare say Ozma will want me on hand there for consultation most of the time—after I take my degree."

At this moment Pill Orangespiegel came into the kitchen from the south lounge where she had been plumping up the divan cushions and doing a little sweep-out. She caught the last of her brother's words.

"You going to live at the Emerald City?" she asked in wonderment. "What about us?" she demanded as naturally as the cookie cook had done.

"I've just been saying to Cayke," replied the practitioner easily; "there's not a reason in the world why you two can't stay on here indefinitely. It should be a nice leisurely life for you. You

won't have me to do for any more, for one thing."

"There is a reason, brother," stated Pill demurely.

"And what might that be, my pet?"

"Lev and I will be wed, as soon as ever I can get word to him!"

"Indeed?! You surprise me. This is all a bit sudden."

"By no means. He popped the question eighteen years ago. But funnily enough I said no. You see, I couldn't think of abandoning you the moment I got a better offer. With you and Cayke not marrying, I never knew but what my services here would be vital one day."

That left Till Orangespiegel with egg on his face. He took an opportunity suddenly to go to the washroom and remove it. The women were left alone to dunk Cayke's krullers in the Skim.

"Congratulations, dear heart," offered the cook, but whether these were simple felicitations, or three cheers for defiance, she didn't say. "Pity," she went on, "that Levimeyerabloch wasn't here for the recent goings-on. He'd have liked seeing his friend the Wizard Wam. again too."

"Never mind. Lev was never much hipped on magic. I suppose you know how clueless he was about those magic necklaces he had?" enquired Fill.

"It rings a bell. What was the story again?"

"He'd got hold of two—or was it three—pretty necklaces of gold filigree and emerald chips, carried them around for decades, it seems, looking for the suitable customer for them. He finally unloaded them to somebody in Skampavia, I think; that's way across the other side of Oz and beyond the great deserts. Then one day in conversation Wam happened to mention that he himself—he's a great jeweler and precious-stone cutter, you know—had made the necklaces donkey's years before and that they were powerful magic talismans. Poor Lev was so naive he'd had them for twenty years and never guessed."

"Why in the world didn't Wam tell him—years before?"

"Oh, in those days there was a general prohibition in Oz against anyone working with magic except a very few accred-

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ited adepts. Now it's much easier. Princess Ozma doesn't mind anybody dabbling in magic, as long as their intentions are good—"

"Or even not so good," interjected Cayke a bit cattily. "From all I gather our Till wasn't up to a great deal of good the time he launched the enchanted mirror."

"I'm afraid you're right. But in this other case Lev had come by the necklaces honorably so Wam felt he had no right to take them away from him. He just omitted to tell him what they were capable of."

Cayke was entertained. Then, "You won't be living here then? I take it, from what you said to Till."

"Oh, no. I've always longed for the romance of posting about in Lev's Scalawagon with him. Do you know I've never budged a foot off the property here since I came here with Till so long ago I can't even recall clearly when it was?"

"You too then?" mused Cayke. "I didn't know. I've always been—well to put it crudely; a 'sucker for romance'. I thought you were more of a homebody."

"Oh, I enjoy the home comforts all right. But they don't have to be exaggerated."

I'm not sure I'd have been *quite* so keen about traveling in the old buggy but you know this Scalawagon has an enclosed rear, with a bunk *just* big enough for two, and a magic-powered hot-plate, so we can cook out on fair days and do hot water for washing. I think I'm going to love it."

"Good for you, dear. I wish you every happiness... I suppose Lev's cheetah still runs with him?"

"Yes, and still changes his colors! He was black with pale green spots when I saw him last. And if he no longer needs to be draft animal, he's still good protection if one meets anyone unpleasant."

"Oh, that could never happen in Oz! " said Cayke with a twinkle in her eye.

"Of course not!" laughed her friend. "Except sometimes."

There was a moon that night and it cheered Cayke the cookie

cook as she left the round house at a tiny hour, wearing her serape and carrying a magic rope and a few things in a shoulder bag.

The Brigand with Bright Eyes would be an old man now. Or maybe not *so* old. Cayke wasn't sure how fast one aged in the desert. She had done so just very slightly in six years. But then an older man might be expected to be that little more attracted by a younger women, as she herself still appeared to be.

She had a mile to go to the great orange glass standard that marked the boundary between Oz and the desert. The glass itself had been shattered in the frightful smash that had taken place day before yesterday but the huge ozinium standard still stood, seemingly indestructible, as a landmark in the wilderness.

When she came level with it she paused for a moment. Then, like Marlene some years earlier, she kicked off her shoes and prepared to seek her man out on the sandy wastes. She had been in his company twice in her life. Perhaps the third time was the charm.

She stumbled only once. Her toe struck a little twist of case-hardened silver that had once been the frame of a magic mirror.

Lund

13 May - 17 June 1985