

The Lost King Of Oz – Oz 19

L. Frank Baum

This book is dedicated to

My Best Girl-Mother

-Ruth Plumly Thompson

THE LOST KING OF OZ

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CHAPTER 1

In Jolly Kimbabo

THE KING OF KIMBALOO was kind'a jolly, and Kinda Jolly was the King of Kimbaloo. And no wonder he was kind'a jolly! He had made a great fortune in buttons, and had one of the coziest castles in Oz. It was set in the very center of a thick button wood in the Gilliken country, and had more chimneys and windows than any dozen castles I can think of.

The castle owed much of its coziness to Rosa Merry, the quaint little Queen of Kimbaloo, who kept it spick and spandy and simply blooming with flowers. This she could easily do, for in the castle garden grew a simply enormous bouquet bush, where old and new fashioned bouquets blossomed in bewildering profusion. There were violets and rosebuds edged with lace paper, lovely red roses tied with satin bows, daisies and daffodils, pinks and larkspur, and every other sort of delightful nosegay you could ever imagine. No matter how many were gathered, others immediately blossomed, so that Rosa Merry had made almost as much of a fortune in bouquets as Kinda had in buttons, and could have jelly-roll every lunch-time if she cared to.

There were some who thought the castle, built as it was of dark purple button wood, studded with rows and rows of bright buttons; extremely odd, but it suited Kinda Jolly and Rosa Merry right down to the cellar and the five hundred inhabitants of Kimbaloo thought it extremely magnificent. No doubt they were right. However that may be, anyone who had seen Kinda Jolly and Rosa Merry walking in the gardens on pleasant summer evenings would have had to admit they were the most lovable little couple in the land. Kinda was short and fat and Rosa was short and merry. They both dressed in the purple costumes of the Gillikens, but their robes were trimmed all over with buttons that chinked delightfully when they walked and almost dazzled one by the brilliance of their colors.

King Kinda's crown was made of silver buttons to match his whiskers and Rosa's was of gold to match her curls. Both had cheerful dispositions to match their crowns, so that life in Kimbaloo was cheerful for everyone. The Kimbles themselves lived in tiny cottages scattered about under the trees, and as they were all girls and boys, they were all happy and light hearted as birds in the button wood. Half of them worked for the King and half for the Queen. Yes, every morning, the two hundred and fifty merry little maids would run into the castle garden, where Rosa Merry would fill their arms with bouquets from the bouquet bush. Then away down the Queen's Highway, that led through the wood into the Winkie Country, they would hurry-and so charming and quaint were the Queen's little flower girls - no one could help buying their posies. So bynoontime they would come back with empty arms and heavy pockets and nothing to do for the rest of the day but swing in the hammocks or dance in the gardens.

The boys' work was almost as delightful. Every morning they would scamper into the button wood with Kinda Jolly and shake down a good crop of buttons. Then each button boy would fill his button box with a gay assortment and set off down the King's Highway to sell them to the good dames in the Gilliken Country. There are no stores in Oz, so they never had any trouble in disposing of their wares, especially the collar buttons. The men of the Gilliken country are as good at losing collar buttons as men in your own town, so by noon time the button boxes would be full of coins and button boys would come racing back to the castle with nothing more to do for the rest of the day but play quoits or "button-button-who's-got-the-button?"

Altogether, life in Kimbabo was as jolly as possible. Indeed, there was so much laughing to be done that King Kinda had a Town Laugher to help out on particularly funny days and to keep him from busting all the buttons from his purple vest. Yes sir, everybody in Kimbaloo was laughing and happy-excepting one and that person was the King's cook. Mombi never laughed at all, and how she came to be cook I will tell you at once. She was not a native of Kimbabo and, though no one in the kingdom knew it, Mombi was really an old Gilliken witch. Long ago, for her wicked transformations, she had been deprived of her magic powers by Glinda, the good sorceress, and given enough to live on honestly and comfortably.

But after you have been a witch all of your life, it is dreadfully hard to settle down to being just an ugly old woman. Mombi had stood it as long as she could, and then one day she had closed up her little hut at the foot of the Gilliken mountains, taken her crooked stick, and set out to seek a position as cook in one of the castles of Oz-for she felt that only among a great many kettles and cauldrons could

she ever be contented or at home. Besides being cross and crooked, Mombi was so ugly and ill-tempered that most of the castle doors were slammed in her face, but one day she had come to Kimbaloo. Hobbling through the button wood she found King Kinda Jolly under a shoe button tree. Falling upon her knees Mombi begged him so hard to let her remain as cook that the gentle old monarch finally consented, though much against the advice of Hah Hoh, the Town Laugher. But Kinda, thinking her a poor and needy old woman, had kept her nevertheless, and as Mombi, like many another old witch, was an excellent cook, he had never regretted his bargain. In spite of her wonderful cooking no one had ever grown really fond of her, but she was treated with consideration and respect and allowed to do pretty much as she pleased in the castle kitchen.

So while everyone else in the kingdom was being useful and happy, Mombi went muttering and sputtering about among the pots and kettles and every minute when she was not cooking she was trying to remember her magic formulas, mixing pepper with onions, onions with cinders, and cinders with suspender buttons. But stir as she would, nothing ever came of it, for Mombi had forgotten every witch word she had ever known. She knew a good many other words, however, and said very nearly all of them when her magic failed to work, flinging her stick into the air and hopping up and down with rage and disappointment. But as she never allowed anyone in the kitchen but herself, there was no one to witness her shocking behavior, until Snip, one of the King's button boys, climbing through the window one afternoon to steal a cooky, caught her right in the midst of a frightful incantation.

"Salt-vinegar-mustard-mutton!

The king shall be a collar button!"

That was what Snip heard Mombi mumble, bending over a peppery mixture on the fire. So dreadful was her expression as she scowled into the frying pan that Snip tumbled from the window sill into a rose bush. Picking himself up, he rushed down the garden path convinced that the King was done for. But there was Kinda Jolly, with his silver crown, walking calmly under the button trees. Snip looked again to be sure Kinda was not turning to a collar button and then, a little ashamed of being so easily frightened, he crept back to the ledge to see what Mombi would do next. He was just in time to see her fling the frying pan down the cellar steps and kick over a basket of potatoes. Then, grumbling and snarling and rubbing her shins, she limped into the garden to fetch the goose Kinda Jolly had bought for dinner-for magic or no magic the cooking had to be attended to. The goose had come straight from a neighboring farm and was still in the flimsy wooden crate. Scowling and scolding, Mombi slammed the crate on the table and ripped off the top slats.

As soon as the slats were removed, the goose thrust its head out of the crate and peered about the kitchen. As he looked at the big white bird, Snip had a feeling that there was something human about him. The old witch-cook made a grab at the bobbing white head.

"Help!" squawked the luckless bird, as Mombi seized it roughly by the feathers. Then, catching a really good look at Mombi, it reared up its neck till its eyes were on a level with her own. "YOU!" cried the goose, so shrilly that Snip's hair rose up and waved to and fro under his stiff little hat. He was not surprised to hear the goose talk, for all beasts and birds in the Land of Oz converse, but its next words were so strange and mysterious the little button boy nearly lost his balance again.

"Woman!" hissed the goose, thrusting its bill under Mombi's long nose, "Woman, what have

you done with the King?"

CHAPTER 2

Snip's Great Adventure

THE King! Poor Snip, crouched uncomfortably on the narrow sill, trembled with terror, for this time he was sure Mombi's incantation had taken effect and had turned King Kinda to a collar button. Mombi herself seemed as astonished as he. Dropping her hands at her sides, she peered sharply at the great white goose.

"Well!" wheezed the old witch, blinking her eyes rapidly, "Well, if it isn't Pajuka, and simple as ever he was!"

"Whose fault is that?" complained the goose bitterly. "Who took away my elegant figure and gave me this ridiculous shape?"

"You always were a goose," sniffed Mombi. "All you needed was a bill and feathers. You're one of the best transformations I ever did," she added proudly. "What are you fussing about anyway?"

"Would you like to be a goose?" asked the bird indignantly. "I should think you'd be ashamed of yourself, you old Scundermutch!"

"I don't care a waffle what you think," retorted Mombi, "but if you care to think anything more, be quick about it, for your time has come."

"Time?" puffed the goose. "What time?"

"Dinner time," said Moinbi unfeelingly. "You are tired of being a goose. Well then, you shall be a dinner and I trust you will pan out well!"

"Dinner!" screamed the goose, fluttering all of his feathers. "You wouldn't dare serve me for dinner. I'm a Prime Minister and you know it."

"Prime goose, you mean," snickered Mombi, reaching behind the table for the ax.

Now all this, as you may well imagine, was frightfully interesting to Snip. Raising himself on his elbow he saw the two glaring furiously at one another.

"Don't sass me woman!" hissed Pajuka, flapping his wings.

"I'll apple sass you," sneered Momhi. "The sooner you are roasted the better. You know far too much." She made a snatch at the goose, but Pajuka, with a quick flounce, freed himself from the crate and soared into the air.

"Help! Help! This woman is a witch," he honked loudly. "Help. Help!"

"Hush!" raged the old woman, dropping the ax and running to slam the door. "Do you want to rouse the castle?" It was her turn to be alarmed now, for in Kimbabo Mombi enjoyed more privileges than she would anywhere else, and she was not anxious to have it known that she was a witch and so be turned out of the kingdom. "Be quiet I tell you," she wheezed angrily. "What are you making such a racket about?"

"Mombi a witch!" Snip could hardly believe his ears, but frightened as he was he could not help chuckling. "Who wouldn't make a fuss at roasting," thought Snip, peering around the edge of the sill to see what Pajuka would do. The goose had settled on a cupboard high above Mombi's head.

"Very well," he breathed heavily. "I will be quiet, but now you will listen to me. I demand that you instantly restore my proper shape or-" He gave a loud squawk that made Mombi leap a foot into the air.

"How can I? How can I?" chattered the witch, wringing her hands. "I've forgotten all my witchcraft. Do you suppose I'd be here as a cook if I had my magic powers, you ridiculous old bird!" Snip could see Pajuka's eyes grow round as buttons at this dismal news.

"What?" wailed the unhappy goose. "Must I continue forever to lead this simple life? Must I associate with ducks and farmers to the end of my days?"

"You ought to be glad you're alive at all," mumbled Mombi uncomfortably. These words had a startling effect on Pajuka.

"Ah!" groaned the goose remorsefully. "Here I've been thinking of myself when it is the King who matters." And stretching his long neck he repeated the question that had so alarmed Snip in the first place. "Woman!" rasped Pajuka hoarsely, "Woman, what have you done with the King?"

"Not so loud," begged Mombi, raising her stick and glancing uneasily over her shoulder, as if she half suspected someone were listening. Then, seeing Pajuka was going to honk again, she added defiantly, "I don't remember what I did with him!"

Now Snip, who loved King Kinda Jolly with all his heart, was stunned at this dreadful news. Undecided whether to run for help or stay and listen, he finally decided to stay and crept close to the inner edge of the sill.

Pajuka seemed stunned too. "How frightful," choked the goose dolefully, "how careless of you to mislay the King. How dare you forget?"

"Well, there's no use quarreling about it," grumbled Mombi. "Who cares anyway? Ozma is Queen now and nobody even remembers there was a King of Oz!"

"Of Oz!" Snip, between relief at finding nothing had happened to King Kinda Jolly and shock at the old witch's words, lost his hold on the window bars and fell straight into Mombi's arms.

"A spy!" shrieked Mombi, beginning to shake him backward and forward. "A spy!"

"Now who's making a racket," demanded Pajuka triumphantly. "Keep that up and you'll have the whole castle about our ears. Besides, if he's a spy, where is his spy glass?"

"Idiot!" hissed Mombi, but she lowered her voice and stopped shaking Snip. "Why, you're as simple as you look," she muttered contemptuously.

"And you're as wicked," retorted the goose, staring sharply at Snip. "Let that boy alone or I'll honk my head off." Snip's ears were buzzing from the shaking and he looked gratefully at Pajuka.

"Do you think I'm going to let him carry his tales to Kinda Jolly? No sir! Into the soup kettle with him," puffed Mombi, rushing Snip toward the stove. But at her first step, the white goose flung himself at her head with such an outcry that she stopped at once.

"Let the boy alone," panted Pajuka. Then, seeing that it was useless to appeal to Mombi's goodness he began to appeal to her badness. "The King will reward you generously, if you restore him to the throne," began Pajuka craftily. "Nothing is to be gained by this quarreling. Let us put our heads together and find the King of Oz."

Still holding Snip tightly by the wrist, Mombi sank upon a crooked stool and, half closing her eyes, began to think of the bad old days before little Ozma was Queen-the bad old days when witches had been free to practice their arts and she herself was one of the most powerful witches in the land.

"I'll do it!" declared Mombi suddenly. "But how shall we find him when I forget what I have done with him?"

"I'd know him anywhere," gulped Pajuka, two tears dropping off the end of his bill. "Haven't I been hunting him all these years?"

"Yes, but I think he is transformed," muttered Mombi uneasily. "If the King is not himself how do you expect to recognize him?"

"I'd know him in any shape," insisted the goose. "But try-try to remember. You turned Ozma to a boy and me to a goose. What did you do with the King?"

So interested had the two become by this time, they had almost forgotten the presence of Snip. But Snip was listening with all his might, his ears fairly tingling with curiosity. The lad, like many another Gilliken boy, was perfectly familiar with the history of Oz. For while they gathered buttons in the wood, King Kinda had read them many a strange chapter from the big purple history books.

Snip knew that Oz was a great oblong Kingdom divided into four parts with the capital, a splendid Emerald City, in the exact center. The Northern Land was the Gilliken country and Kimbaloo was but one of the many kingdoms in that interesting section. The Eastern part of Oz belonged to the Winkies; the Southern country was the Quadling Country; while the Western lands belonged to the Munchkins. Snip knew the names of the rulers of Oz as well as you know the names of the Presidents-perhaps even better-for as only a part of Oz history has been written down there have not been so many. The first ruler mentioned was the famous Wizard of Oz, who had flown to the marvelous country in a balloon from Omaha. It was the Wizard who had built the famous Emerald City, and who had given Ozma, the little girl ruler, into the keeping of an old witch. This witch had already captured the King, Ozma's father, and very little was known about the royal gentleman.

The Wizard had ruled Oz for years. At last, desiring to return to America, he had made the Scarecrow Emperor. This lively man of straw had held the throne until captured by an ambitious girl named Jinjur, and her army of girls. But Jinjur was only ruler for a few days and was herself captured by

Glinda, the good sorceress of the South, to whom the scarecrow had gone for help. Glinda, looking through her magic record books, had discovered that Ozma, who had been deposed by the Wizard, was still in the old witch's clutches. So Glinda had compelled her to restore Ozma to the throne. The witch had transformed the little Princess into a boy named Tip, but was forced by Glinda to disenchant her and amid general rejoicing Ozma was proclaimed Queen of Oz and had been ruler ever since, while the old witch had been deprived of her magic powers and banished from the Emerald City forever.

The Wizard of Oz had later returned and become one of Ozma's most trusted counselors, regretting exceedingly his part in giving her to the witch. As Snip listened, all of these facts went scurrying through his head, and while Professor Wogglebug in his history had neglected to put in the witch's name, looking at the dreadful old woman beside him, Snip realized with a shudder that Mombi was that witch.

It had been generally supposed that the King, Ozma's father, had been utterly destroyed by Mombi's magic, but if what Pajuka said were true, the King in some shape or other was still alive and the rightful ruler of Oz, while this faithful goose was his prime minister. Snip longed to run to Kinda Jolly with the amazing news and to warn him against Mombi herself, but the old hag had him fast by the wrist, so there was nothing to do but listen. Even this was becoming harder and harder, for Mombi and Pajuka had lowered their voices to a whisper. Just as Snip had determined to jerk away and make a run for it, Mombi sprang to her feet.

"We'll start at once!" she cried determinedly, and jerking off her cook's cap and without releasing her hold on Snip, she snatched her peaked witch hat from a low cupboard and set it jauntily on the side of her head. Then, dragging Snip with her, she began hobbling about the kitchen, collecting pepper shakers, mustard boxes, spices, herbs and various other supplies from the shelves. These she tossed quickly into a basket with a loaf of bread, a cold chicken and some cheese.

"C'mon!" croaked the witch, motioning to Pajuka. "C'mon before anyone misses us.

"What about the boy?" asked the goose doubtfully.

"Let him carry the basket," snapped the witch.

Thrusting the basket into Snip's hands, Mombi gave him such a glare that the poor lad's heart dropped into his boots. Then, grabbing him by the sleeve, she rushed him through the door leading into the kitchen garden. A high hedge surrounded the garden, so no one saw them go. The garden ran down to the edge of a gloomy forest. Into this forest plunged Mombi, Pajuka waddling and flying after her and poor Snip, casting many longing glances over his shoulder at the dear old castle of Kimbaloo where life had been so carefree and so merry.

It is one thing to set out on a journey of adventures yourself, but to be dragged away against your will by a wicked old witch is another pair of pickles entirely, and though Snip was as brave as the next fellow he could not keep back his tears at parting from Kinda Jolly, Rosa Merry and his many gay comrades in the button wood.

CHAPTER 3

King Kinda Jolly Is Sad

WHILE all this was happening in the King's kitchen, Kinda Jolly sat cheerfully on his throne, talking to his pretty little Queen.

"Rosa, my dear," smiled Kinda, tugging at his silver whiskers, "guess what we're going to have for dinner."

Rosa Merry, who was sewing a button on the King's suspenders, paused with her needle in the air.

"What does it begin with?" asked Rosa curiously. The Queen simply doted on a riddle.

"With a G," answered Kinda Jolly, leaning down to pat Trippsy, his pet foot stool, Trippsy is the only live footstool, I think, I have ever heard of. He followed Kinda wherever he went, which was fortunate, for the King's legs were so short that no matter how low the chair or bench, his feet never touched the floor. In some ways Trippsy was a more useful pet than a dog. He never chased cats, nor got into fights, nor barked, except a few shins, so that Kinda Jolly was awfully fond of him.

"Is it a goat?" giggled Rosa Merry, biting off her thread.

"Goat!" sputtered Kinda Jolly. "I should say not! Trippsy, old boy, she says we're going to have goat for dinner." Trippsy, who had been to market with the King-Kinda being one of those dear old fashioned fellows who do their own marketing-waved his tassel faintly to show that he appreciated the joke, while General Whiffenpuff, the King's body guard, and Hah Hoh, the Town Laugher burst into loud roars of merriment.

"Guess again," invited Kinda Jolly, putting his finger tips together, and beaming on his pretty wife.

"Grapes, glue, gum drops?" ventured the Queen, puckering up her forehead. "Gravy, ginger, griddle cakes. I know, it's griddle cakes!"

"Grapes and glue and griddle cakes

Will give us frightful stomach aches!

Ginger, grapes and glue and gravy

Oh, some kind doctor come and save ye!"

That was the best that Hah Hoh could think of, but they all laughed so loud that seven little button boys stuck their heads in the window to see what all the fun was about.

"Well, do you give it up?" asked Kinda, after Rosa had made seven more merry guesses.

"Yes," said the Queen, shaking her head till the curls flew out in every direction. "What is it?"

"A goose!" puffed Kinda Jolly, settling back comfortably on his throne. "The finest, fattest goose you ever saw in your life. Cost me a thousand gold buttons," he finished, smacking his lips and winking at General Whiffenpuff. The General, who was fonder of eating than of anything else, began to pat his stomach absently and Trippsy, though far too well stuffed to require food, gave a skip of satisfaction that nearly upset the King.

"Roast goose and apple sauce," mused Kinda, regaining his balance. "Yum-yum, Whiffen, old rascal, just step out to the pantry, and see how the dinner's progressing. It's high time our goose was cooked, and I for one am hungry as a hippogriff." They were still laughing at Hah Hoh's jokes, when Whiffenpuff returned, but one look at the General sobered them at once.

"Guess what we're going to have for dinner?" panted Whiffenpuff, very red in the face from his hurry.

"What?" asked Rosa in surprise.

"Nuthin' " gulped the General dolefully. "The dinner's not going, it's GONE! Our goose is hooked, tooked, crooked," finished Whiffen-puff, forgetting his grammar entirely. (Of course, we have known this all along, but it was a great shock to the King.)

"Gone!" gasped Kinda Jolly. "But where is Mombi?"

"Gone too!"

"To where?"

Whiffenpuff shook his head glumly and immediately Rosa Merry, Kinda Jolly and all the rest rushed into the kitchen to see for themselves how gone everything was. Naturally enough they found neither Mombi nor Pajuka and, on the whole, this was most fortunate, for otherwise they might have eaten the Prime Minister of Oz and swallowed with him the whole of this story.

"Our dinner began with a G and now it's gone! Gone begins with a G. Our dinner is gone with a G! Shall I laugh?" asked Hah Hoh, beginning to tickle himself in the ribs.

"I should say not. Why, this is no laughing matter. No cook! No goose! No dinner! Oh! I'm so disappointed I could cry!" choked Kinda Jolly, puffing out his cheeks.

"Don't do that! Don't do that!" begged Rosa Merry, and tumbling off her high stool she sent a page flying for the Town Crier. I never told you there was one, but Kimbaloo has a Town Crier as well as a Town Laugher, for no one in that merry Kingdom ever thinks of shedding tears.

So before one could wink the Town Crier came running in with a page, and when Whiffenpuff told him about the lost dinner, the lost goose and the lost cook, he simply burst into tears.

"How long shall I cry?" he sobbed, looking around his handkerchief at Kinda Jolly.

"Seven minutes for the goose and th-three for Mombi," sniffed the King, biting his lip to keep from crying himself. So the Town Crier jerked out another hanky, and while all the rest stood around and looked solemn and Kinda held his watch, he wept eye after eye full of tears.

"Do you feel better?" asked Rosa Merry presently, patting Kinda's plump hand.

"A little, a little," acknowledged the King, "but do you s'pose Mombi's gone for good?"

"Well, I trust so," sniffed the Town Laugher, shrugging his shoulders, "but I'm afraid she has gone for bad, your Majesty. A more evil appearing old wretch I've never seen in Oz, and perhaps we are well rid of her. Only a week ago I had a letter from a sixteenth cousin of mine in the Emerald City telling of a famous invisible cook who lived near her. Why not send for this invisible cook your Highness?"

"That's what we've got now, isn't it?" put in General Whiffenpuff, gloomily, but Kinda's eyes began to snap at the Town Laugher's suggestion.

"Why an invisible cook would be simply out of sight!" cried the King, motioning for the Town Crier to cease his lamentations. "Let us send for her at once!"

"And meanwhile I'll be cook," smiled Rosa Merry, happy that everything was turning out so well. "Guess what we're going to have for dinner?"

"Omelet!" gulped the Town Crier, wringing out his handkerchiefs in a business-like fashion and immediately the rest began to guess this and then that till they were all as jolly as possible. But right in the midst of the merriment, in came ten little button boys to report the disappearance of Snip.

"Snip gone," groaned Kinda Jolly, clapping his hand to his head and falling back against the flour barrel. "Oh! This is the worst of all. Why he's the brightest boy in Kimbaloo and the best button picker I've got. Cry! Cry some more, cry a lot!" wailed the poor King, shaking the Town Crier by the arm. So he did, and the Town Laugher had to blow his nose hard, to keep from crying himself, for Snip was a great favorite in the palace.

As soon as the news got about, all the rest of the Kimbles came tumbling into the kitchen, and the two hundred and forty nine little button boys began to hug Kinda Jolly, and the two hundred and fifty little flower girls began to hug Rosa Merry. Trippsy, the pet foot stool, who loved Snip almost as much as Kinda Jolly, was so upset he dashed here and there till everyone else was that way, too, especially General Whiffenpuff. Altogether the confusion was terrific.

"Wait!" grunted the General, picking himself up for the fifth time. "Wait! I will find them all!" Seizing his gun, and with never a thought of dinner, he plunged boldly out into the night to find Mombi, the goose, Snip and an invisible cook. After that things grew calmer, for the King had great confidence in Whiffenpuff. The boys and girls trooped back to their cottages and the rest sat down to a picnic supper out of the ice box.

"Whiffenpuff will find 'em, no fear," whispered Hah Hoh, squeezing Kinda Jolly's hand comfortingly, "and if he doesn't just remember that I also have something up my sleeve!"

"What is it?" asked the King mournfully, and as clearly as he could, for he had half a chicken sandwich in the other cheek.

"A funny bone," confided the Town Laugher, with so comical and important an expression that Kinda had to be thumped on the back to keep from choking.

"A funny bone!" gasped the King, as he recovered his breath. "Let me see it, you rascal."

So the Town Laugher showed Kinda Jolly his left elbow and they both roared at the joke.

CHAPTER 4

In the Purple Forest

SNIP thought of a great many things to tell Mombi as he was being dragged along through the forest, but she ran so far and so fast that by the time she stopped he was too bumped about and breathless to say any of them.

"Now what?" puffed Pajuka, settling on the lowest branch of a purple pine.

"Well, do you expect to find the King under the first tree we come to?" panted the old witch, dropping down on a stump and mopping her forehead with her apron. "Hand over that basket, you." Before he could comply, Mombi had snatched the basket from Snip and, loosening her hold upon his arm, began rummaging among its contents till she found a small purple scroll. "Keep your eye on the boy," ordered Mombi, snapping the scroll open, "and if he tries to escape nip off his nose, d'ye hear?"

"Oh, I'm sure he wouldn't do that," said Pajuka, fluttering his wings. "He'd much rather come with us to find the King and share the reward, wouldn't you lad?"

Snip glanced fearfully around him. The shadows were growing longer and longer, and in the dim purple twilight the forest looked so grim and forbidding that he decided even bad company was better than none. So he shook his head and swallowing the lump in his throat resolved to make the best of things, and at the same time find out all he could about this mysterious affair.

"What did I tell you," clucked Pajuka, preening his feathers. "I shouldn't be surprised if he'd be a great help to us, Mombi!"

"Then let him begin by gathering some wood," grunted Mombi, "and none of your tricks Snip my boy, or I'll turn you to a muffin and eat you for breakfast."

"Is Snip your name?" asked Pajuka, waddling after the little button boy. Snip nodded and began slowly picking up twigs and putting them in a heap.

"A heartless old wretch," wheezed the goose, when they were out of ear shot. "Don't mind her. She can no more turn you to a muffin than I can, but she is the only one who can help me find the King so we must humor her. Stick by me Snip and I'll stick by you. Is it a bargain?" In the strange, silent forest, the white goose looked so big and friendly that Snip dropped his twigs and flung both arms around his neck.

"I like you Pajuka," said the little button boy, giving him a quick hug.

"And I like you, Snip," replied the goose, snuggling close to him. Then, as Mombi glanced up

suspiciously, they both fell to gathering twigs and in a few moments had enough for a fine fire. Mombi was still poring over the scroll. Looking over her shoulder, Snip saw that it was a map of Oz-such a map as he had often seen in his geoziphy books at home. Mombi held the map close to her nose, for in the failing light it was hard to see anything.

"If I could only remember! If I could only remember!" muttered Mombi, rocking backward and forward on the stump. "What did I do with the King? Where did I put him? What did I use-green magic or blue, word magic or number magic, fire magic or smoke magic? Can't you remember anything?" She whirled in great exasperation upon Pajuka.

"Well, not much," sighed the goose, rubbing his head with his wing. "You see it was so long ago. I do remember we were in a small greenwood near where the Emerald City stands today when you changed me to a goose. But as you drove me away immediately, I never knew what became of the King."

"Then it was green magic!" cried Mombi, springing up exultantly. "We must go to the Emerald City and find that wood, for if the King was transformed by green magic he must be restored by green magic, and the only place where green magic takes effect is in and around the Emerald City. Once there I will doubtless remember everything," chuckled Mombi. "If I don't, I'll just steal some of Ozma's magic. I'll steal the magic belt, restore the King to the throne and have my revenge for all these weary years. I'll turn Ozma to a piano and thump her every day," continued Mombi, rubbing her hands gleefully together. "I'll turn everyone else in the palace to one object and then destroy that object

"I object!" spluttered Pajuka, treading on the old witch's toes in his excitement.

"So will they," grinned Mombi, showing her yellow tusks, "but it will do them no good. Don't stand staring at me, simpleton. Light the fire." Whirling upon Snip, Mombi raised her stick threateningly, and Snip, who had been staring with open mouth (for he had never heard so much badness in his whole life) made haste to do as he was told.

Mombi, still muttering and chuckling, began to lay out the chicken and cheese upon the tree stump. Though the fire snapped merrily enough, supper was not very cheerful for Snip, but he ate the chicken wing and small bit of cheese that Mombi grudgingly gave him and broke up some bread for Pajuka.

"Where've you been all these years?" asked the old witch, looking curiously at the goose over her mug of coffee.

"Everywhere, everywhere in Oz, searching for you and the King," puffed Pajuka. "I've lived with miserable barnyard fowls, eating farmer's scraps, and in constant danger of the ax. You might have made me a wild goose, then at least I should have had some fun. I shudder when I think how near I've been to roasting."

"Well, didn't they roast you in the old days?" replied Mombi unfeelingly. "Prime ministers are as often roasted as geese!"

"Yes, but not in the same way." Pajuka rolled his eyes sadly at Snip.

"Why didn't you tell Ozma or Glinda on her," asked the little button boy boldly.

"Aha! Because he knew if he did he'd disappear entirely. That was part of the trick," shrilled

Mombi. "Wasn't it, old feather head?"

"Yes, it's better to be a goose than nothing at all," admitted Pajuka mournfully. "But never mind, when we find the King, he will restore Mombi's powers and she will restore my elegant figure and

"Oh, hold your bill," snapped Mombi crossly.

Looking very ruffled, Pajuka retired to the other side of the fire, where he and Snip conversed in low tones, while Mombi cleared away the supper and began her endless experiments in the old black frying pan.

"I should think in some ways, being a goose would be rather nice," observed Snip, looking inquisitively at Pajuka. "Having wings for instance, and never needing to get undressed or have your hair cut."

"Well," agreed Pajuka slowly, "feathers are more convenient than clothes and while the life of a goose is very simple, it is not all unpleasant. I've enjoyed flying a lot, and I never need to worry about rubbers or carrying an umbrella. But after all," Pajuka sighed and gazed sadly into the fire, "after all, my boy, there is nothing like being yourself."

Snip considered this for a little while in silence, trying to fancy himself in Pajuka's place. "Well, what do you miss the most?" he inquired suddenly. Pajuka had one eye shut and was preparing to close the other, but at Snip's words both flew wide open.

"My pockets," gasped Pajuka, with a great groan. "What is a man without his pockets? No place to put his hands or his bills!" Clapping his wing to his side, Pajuka looked tragically at Snip, and Snip patting his own bulging pockets-pockets full of cake crumbs, marbles, pencil stubs and string-nodded sympathetically. "And not only that," continued the goose in a grieved voice, "I waken at such ridiculous hours. Hah, hoh! I find myself falling asleep." Pajuka paused here for a simply tremendous yawn. "Right after supper, Hoh hum!" finished the goose apologetically. Then, tucking his head under his wing and drawing up one leg, he fell fast asleep before Snip could ask him another question.

Pajuka was so close to the fire that the little button boy was afraid he would singe his feathers. So, picking him up carefully, he set him back against a gnarled old tree and, curling up on a pile of leaves beside him, lay watching old Mombi. The wind fortunately was blowing away from him, or he certainly would have been choked by the awful mixtures in the black frying pan. If he had not known positively that her magic powers were gone, he would have taken to his heels at once, for the monsters that Mombi was trying to conjure up out of the frying pan, would have devoured him in a minute.

"Magicum squadgicum squidgicum sudge

I order a snooch to come out of this smudge!"

Mombi frowned darkly as she hissed this, but only a dense smoke rose from the frying pan, and after listening nervously to ten separate incantations and finding that nothing at all happened, Snip curled down among the leaves and was soon as fast asleep as Pajuka-asleep -and dreaming he, himself, was a goose being chased up a pink mountain by a giant with a blue ax.

Mombi continued her experiments with the frying pan long after Snip and Pajuka were asleep, but finally she gave up in disgust and then she, too, lay down for a nap, which lasted until dawn.

CHAPTER 5

The Rolling Hoopers

SNIP was awakened by a tickling feeling of his nose and, opening his eyes, saw Pajuka standing over him with a big bunch of grapes in his bill. "Hello!" yawned Snip, sitting up and rubbing his eyes sleepily. "Is it morning?"

Pajuka dropped the grapes into his lap. "Half past it. Been up since five, had a fly and a swim and brought you these for breakfast," clucked the goose, who seemed to be in a fine humor. "Mombi's eaten all the rest of the chicken herself, the old Scundermutch!"

The sun filtered down cheerily through the treetops and a fresh little breeze had set all the forest leaves to dancing. Snip, himself, felt curiously light hearted and gay. Perhaps it was the long sleep he had had in the open, or the friendly presence of Pajuka, or the thought of the strange adventures that lay ahead. Anyway, he jumped up with a will and even the scowl old Mombi gave him failed to dampen his spirits. She had already prepared and eaten her breakfast and was beating out the fire with her shoe. Following Pajuka to a small sparkling brook, Snip splashed his face and hands vigorously, ate his grapes and a large sugar bun that the thoughtful Pajuka had plucked from a nearby bun bush. By this time Mombi had her basket packed and, shaking her stick crossly, announced it was time to start.

"Which way are we going?" asked Snip, taking the basket and falling into step beside her.

"My way!" snapped Mombi fiercely.

"Well, that's a witch way, isn't it,," observed Pajuka, flopping along a few feet overhead and winking down slyly at Snip, as he plodded down the road.

"Hold your bill," snapped Mombi, hobbling along so fast that the little button boy had to skip to keep pace with her. "I told you last night we were going to the Emerald City."

"But I thought you were banished from there forever," put in Snip, who knew his Oz history by heart.

"I shall disguise myself," shrilled Mombi triumphantly. "I'll pretend I'm a market woman selling a fat goose and while I'm arguing with the cook, Pajuka shall fly into the palace and steal some of Ozma's magic."

"How do you know I shall?" honked Pajuka sulkily. "Ozma has never done me any harm. The thing for us to do is to find the King. Once we've come to the little wood where you transformed him you'll remember where he is. Why, maybe we'll find him before then."

"Yes, but what good will it do if I don't remember my magic," sniffed Mombi. "Unless you want to be a goose for the rest of your life, you'd better make up your mind to do what I say. As for you," the old witch whirled angrily upon Snip, "any more of this supposing and I'll turn you to a six pence and spend you at the first village."

Snip merely whistled and turned up his nose at this, for he knew perfectly well Mombi could not carry out her threat. Besides Snip had a plan of his own. The little button boy had decided that as soon as they reached the famous capitol of Oz he would slip away from Mombi and tell Princess Ozma the whole story. Then she herself could use her magic to help Pajuka find the King. So he stepped jauntily along, paying no attention to Mombi's mutterings, looking curiously to the right and left and thinking how much he should have to tell Kinda Jolly when he returned to Kimbaloo.

The forest, like all the northern lands of Oz, was slightly tinged with purple, the national color of the Gillikens. Pansies and tall purple flags grew around the bases of the giant trees and here and there clusters of violets nodded their pretty little heads in the breeze. Purple birds darted through the leaves overhead and the air was sweet from hidden beds of lavender, so that nothing could have been pleasanter than the first part of the day's journey. But toward noon they reached a portion of the forest so dark and impenetrable that they had to go single file, and even then had great difficulty in forcing their way through the trees and dense underbrush.

Growls and roars added still further to their discomforts, until Snip, feeling in his pocket for his trusty pen knife, began to wish himself safely back in the button wood. Pajuka half ran and waddled after him, giving every now and then a great flop of terror as a particularly fierce roar came echoing through the forest. Mombi, alone, seemed perfectly unconcerned and hobbled ahead whacking branches and bushes out of the way with her crooked stick.

"Must be lunch time," she called back hoarsely over her shoulder.

"Howja guess?" panted Pajuka, keeping as close to Snip as he could, for he was terribly frightened.

"Don't you hear the lions?" asked the old witch maliciously.

"Merciful feathers!" gasped the goose. "Have I come all this way to be a lion's lunch?"

"Here comes one now," shuddered Snip, flattening himself against a tree. But it was not a lion that came hurtling out of the brush. It was a weenix, a wild, bear-like beast with a walrus head. One look at its tusks set Snip's heart beating like a drum. Pajuka flung into the air, flapping his wings and hissing furiously, but the weenix came straight on and Snip, though determined to die with his pen knife in hand, trembled so violently he could scarcely stand up. Even Mombi looked frightend. Grabbing the basket from Snip, she fumbled among its packages and pans and just as the weenix, with outspread paws, leaped upon her, the old witch snatched out the pepper box and shook the entire contents upon its nose. It was purple pepper, fortunately, which is even stronger than red.

"Kawoosh!" spluttered the weenix falling backwards. "Kawoosh-Kawush! Kawoo!" With tears streaming down its tusks and trembling whiskers, it dashed into the shadows, where it could still be heard sneezing broken heartedly. It evidently told its family and friends all about the dangerous travellers, for not another weenix so much as showed a whisker after that.

"Humph!" snorted Mombi, settling her hat, which had gone terribly askew. "I may have

forgotten my magic, but I still know a few tricks, eh Pajuka?"

"Oh, my feathers," panted the goose, leaning up against a tree, "that was worse than roasting."

"How did you ever think of pepper?" asked Snip, who could not help admiring Mombi's quickness. But Mombi merely gave a grunt, thrust the basket back into his hands and began limping along faster than ever. Snip was tired and hungry, but the thought of being left alone in the forest was so much worse than being in the company of a witch that he stumbled and ran after her, comforting himself with the thought of the fine sights he should see in the Emerald City.

Pajuka was tired too, but he hopped and flopped after Skip and another hour brought them to the edge of the forest. The countryside, stretching pleasantly ahead, was shaded with purple, so they knew they were still in the land of the Gillikens. The old witch ordered a halt, while she considered the road.

Mombi pegged her map down on the grass and began studying it carefully. Snip sat down under a tree and began fanning himself with his hat, while Pajuka flew off to find a stream, for the poor goose was parched by his flight through the forest and never felt quite happy out of water.

"How far is the Emerald City?" asked Snip, after watching Mombi for a time in silence.

"Ought to be there by night time," muttered the witch, forgetting for once to scowl. "All we have to do is to keep going southwest." Rolling up the map, Mombi took the rest of the bread and cheese from the basket. Seeing she meant to give him none, Snip went off in search of a bite for himself. In Oz this is not difficult, for the most marvelous plants and trees grow in all of its kingdoms. Scarcely a stone's throw away Snip found a huckleberry-pie plant. He ate several of the small tarts, and then picked a pocket full of plums from a pretty little plum tree that grew by the roadside. The purple Gilliken country is as famous for its plums as the yellow Winkie Land is for its peaches and pears.

Feeling quite refreshed, Snip went to search for Pajuka. Just beyond a thin fringe of trees ran a shallow stream, and Pajuka, in the strange manner of geese, was standing on his head, eating his lunch off the bottom. He looked so comical that Snip nearly burst out laughing, but remembering just in time that Pajuka was the King's prime minister he cleared his throat instead. With a great bounce, Pajuka came right side tip and after a few dives and splashes waded ashore.

"What did you find to eat?" asked Snip curiously.

"Oh some water roots and er other things," answered Pajuka. Seeing he was embarrassed Snip politely changed the subject.

"Tell me about the King," said the little button boy, "and about Oz before Ozma was Queen."

"Well, there was never a kindlier king anywhere," began Pajuka, shaking the water from his feathers.

"What kind?" asked Snip, biting into a plum. "How did he look?"

"Pleasant," explained Pajuka, putting one foot before the other and waddling from side to side in his queer goosey fashion. "He was tall and gentle and very absent-minded, and so kind that he never punished anyone at all."

"Then that's why there were so many witches," cried Snip triumphantly.

"Yes, and that's why it was so easy for Mombi to get him into her power," sighed Pajuka mournfully. "He would believe evil of no one-not even of a witch."

"Seems to me Ozma makes a better ruler," observed Snip, throwing his plum over a tree and standing on his tip toes to see how far it had gone. "She doesn't allow anyone to practice magic, excepting herself, Glinda and the Wizard." This is perfectly true and Oz has enjoyed under the littlest Princess in history an era of great peace and prosperity.

"Ozma is a pretender," insisted Pajuka stiffly. "But she doesn't even know her father's alive," protested Snip. Though he had never seen Ozma, he had a great affection for the little Queen. "What will become of Ozma when we find the King?" he asked doubtfully.

"Oh, she can go back and play with her dolls. She's only a little girl anyway," answered the goose carelessly. Snip did not quite approve of this either, so he changed the subject again.

"There wasn't any Emerald City then, was there Pajuka?"

"No, but we had a splendid castle where the Emerald City now stands and hunting parks in every country of Oz. Ah, those were the good old days," sighed Pajuka sorrowfully. "If I could but see my dear master again I'd be content to remain a goose for the rest of my life."

"I s'pose you do miss him," said Snip sympathetically.

"Miss him!" Pajuka gave a great gulp and turned his head to wipe his tears on his feathers. "Why, I miss him even more than my pockets," groaned the poor goose in a smothered voice.

Snip would have liked to hear more about the King, but a loud screech from Mombi interrupted the story. "Where've you been?" croaked the witch, emerging from a little patch of trees and blinking at them crossly. "I've been ready for hours. C'mon! Do you think this is a picnic?"

"Don't sass me woman," wheezed Pajuka with great dignity, "or I'll not help you a mite. Who got us into this ridiculous mess, may I ask?"

Mombi paid no attention to Pajuka's remarks, but began hobbling down the road and Snip, who could hardly wait to reach the Emerald City, hurried after her, still mumbling crossly to herself. The goose sulkily brought up the rear. The road was fairly good, and zigzagged pleasantly enough through meadows and fields.

"But aren't there any houses?" asked Snip, as they passed through a deserted stretch of woodland. "Aren't there any people or villages or towns?"

"There ought to be," honked Pajuka, who was resting his feet in the air. (That's one advantage of having wings, when your feet are tired you can fly.)

"There are!" snapped Mombi gruffly, and Mombi was right, for just then the wood came to an end and they found themselves facing a large, pleasant park, with dazzling white paths running in every direction. Snip was looking around with deep interest, when six of the strangest beings he had ever seen rose up from a bench a little distance off and stood examining them critically. They were certainly ten feet high and so thin and flat that Snip could scarcely believe they were people at all. But as they had heads,

arms, legs and the usual number of eyes, ears and noses, he concluded they must be people. As the little button boy stared at them, the first of the creatures leaned down, caught hold of its toes and came hurtling at the travelers like a hurricane.

"Whoop!" shrieked the second one, bending over as the first had done and turning itself into a sure enough hoop. "Whoop, whoop!"

"Honk!" screamed Pajuka defiantly, but before Snip and Mombi had time to recover from their surprise the six Hoopers had rolled upon them full-speed, knocking them flat upon their backs. Pajuka just saved himself by a quick flop into the air. Then, without unrolling, the six whizzed off backwards and by the time Snip and Mombi had scrambled up were ready for another dash.

"Get the pepper! Get the pepper!" squawked the goose wildly, but Mombi, furious at her fall, did nothing but hop and howl with rage and Snip, seeing that something must be done, snatched up her crooked stick. As the first Hooper came pelting upon them, he gave it a sharp crack that sent it whirling down the walk. The second and third he served in the same fashion. The fourth he missed, so that Mombi again was rolled in the dust, but the fifth and sixth he caught fairly and, beginning to enjoy the fun, started rolling them like hoops as fast as he could, whacking first one and then another and screaming with laughter at the comical expressions on their faces, when their faces came uppermost.

"Go it, Snip! Go it!" exulted Pajuka, flapping his wings delightedly. But Snip needed no encouragement and only stopped at last for lack of breath. Immediately the Hoopers unrolled and, groaning and whooping and holding their sides, limped off into the bushes. Hundreds of the creatures had gathered by this time and, as Snip sank down on a bench to rest, the very tallest Hooper came rolling toward them.

"What do you mean by beating my subjects in this heartless fashion?" demanded the great fellow, unrolling to his full height and glaring sternly down at the little button boy.

"Well, they started it," replied Snip, keeping a firm hold on Mombi's stick. "Didn't they Pajuka?"

"They certainly did," asserted the goose, settling down on the bench beside Snip. "Is it usual to knock down innocent travelers without reason or ceremony?" - "Is it usual to sit in the presence of a king?" retorted the Hooper stiffly. At this all his subjects began whooping faintly, "Bow down to Rollo the Royal, bow down to King Rollo the Worst!"

"Oh, roll up!" said Snip scornfully. "You're only a lot of live hoops anyway. Why should we bow?"

"Leave the park instantly!" roared Rollo, bouncing up and down with rage.

"Let's," said Snip, grinning over at Pajuka.

"I'm ready," agreed the goose, "but where's Mombi?"

"Here!" spluttered the witch, rolling out of a bonnet bush. "Any more nonsense from these creatures and I'll turn them to breakfast rolls and eat them for supper."

"A witch!" whooped the King.

"A witch!" coughed all the others and, seizing their toes, the whole company of them whirled off together and disappeared in a cloud of dust. So without further excitement, the three adventurers reached the other side of the Hoopers' park and, opening a small gate in the fence that surrounded it, found themselves again on the zig-zag pathway. A large sign posted on one of the trees immediately attracted Snip's attention.

"Fifty leaps to the Corners," announced the sign curiously enough.

"Leaps!" gasped Snip, while Mombi pushed back her hat and stood on tip-toe to examine the crooked letters. "Must we leap all the way?"

"Better look before we do," chuckled Pajuka, scratching his head with the third toe of his left foot. "I've been in some pretty tight corners in my time, and prefer to go around the rest of them."

"We'll go straight on. Who's afraid?" sneered Mombi. Snip, thinking of the way she had hidden in the bonnet bush while he beat off the Hoopers, winked at Pajuka and Pajuka, with a little flutter of his wings, winked back. Then all three started along the narrow path together.

CHAPTER 6

In Catty Corners

SUPPOSE the King were a goat, do you think you would still remember him?" asked Snip, as they zig-zagged along the strange pathway.

"Certainly!" honked Pajuka, fluttering down. "I'd know him in any shape. But why do you ask? What makes you think the King is a goat? Are there any goats around here?" Shooting out his neck,- Pajuka began peering this way and that.

"I don't know," admitted Snip frankly. "I was just wondering."

"You talk too much," snapped Mombi, stopping to pull up her stocking. "If I could remember. my magic I'd turn you to a parrot!"

At this several of the trees that edged the -pathway burst into loud roars of laughter, shaking all over and clasping themselves about the trunk with their branches. Snip was so astonished that he jumped backward and Pajuka, stepping on his own toes, fell forward on his head.

"Oh, my dear Will, these are funny ones, chortled the first tree. "Look at that ridiculous bird and that squidgety old skumpus, and would you count the buttons on the boy's suit. Oh! Oh! I shall die laughing!"

Now Snip's suit, like all the suits of the button wood boys, was generously trimmed with buttons. He had always considered it quite handsome, but now, as the trees continued to rock and roar with merriment, he began to feel uncomfortable and a little provoked.

"Quit your laughing!" puffed Pajuka indignantly. "What right have trees to laugh at people?"

"Every right in Oz," chuckled the second tree, leaning down to tickle Mombi under the chin with one of its twigs. "We're laughing willows, we are, always looking for a good joke, Hah! Hah! And the laugh is on us, Ho! Ho! Isn't that funny, Tree He?"

"Well, we're not jokes," said Snip stiffly. "Come on, Pajuka!" This set the willows to laughing so heartily that their leaves fell in perfect showers. Mombi, in a rage, clapped her hands to her ears and hobbled off and Snip, after a few more remarks which only made the trees laugh harder, ran after her.

"I must say I prefer weeping willows," wheezed Pajuka, catching up with Snip and smoothing out his feathers with his bill. One of the willows had actually had the temerity to tweak him by the tail.

"When I find the King, I'll have you chopped down and up!" screamed Mombi, turning to shake her stick at the offending trees, but neither Snip nor Pajuka bothered to listen to her. They were staring ahead in great astonishment, for the last zig in the road had brought them quite suddenly to the edges of a sparkling inland sea.

"Water!" exulted the goose, instantly restored to good humor. "Oh, let's go swimming!"

"Swimming!" shuddered Mombi, whirling around in a hurry. "Don't you know water is death and destruction to witches?"

"Is it?" asked Snip in pleased surprise, and secretly wondered whether he hadn't better push Mombi in at once. But Pajuka, half guessing what was in his mind, shook his head reprovingly.

"But how are we to get across?" demanded the goose. "I don't see any boats or ferries and

"It's pretty wide to swim," ventured Snip, shading his eyes with his hands and looking anxiously over the tumbling waves. Snip's only experience with swimming had been in a small pool in the button wood and he was not at all sure he would ever reach the other side.

"I could tug you across," said Pajuka, "but what about Mombi?"

"Hold your bill!" snapped the witch in her usual pleasant fashion, and sitting on a stone she scowled down at the sandy beach. Then all at once she hopped up and, hobbling over to Snip, took the basket again.

"Now what?" whispered the little button boy. Pajuka shrugged his wings and rolled up his eyes. but they had not long to wait or wonder, for Mombi, having found what she wanted, sprang on a big rock and hurled a small purple can as far as she could into the rippling blue waters. Then with a grunt of satisfaction, she resumed her seat upon the stone.

"Well?" wheezed Pajuka inquiringly.

"What are we waiting for?" demanded Snip.

"For the sea to jell, idiot!" sniffed Mombi. "In that can is the strongest gelatin in Oz. It took me six years to refine and collect it. Watch the sea and we shall see.

"It is jelling," marvelled Snip, hopping up and down. "Look, Pajuka, the waves have stopped rolling!" This was quite true. The dancing blue waters, caught in their liveliest tumbling, had stiffened with their white frills still upon them and the whole sea was becoming smooth and glassy as a bowl of gelatin, only no gelatin Snip ever had seen was half so beautiful, for the blue sea, tinged in spots with purple and green, sparkled in the sunshine like some large and lovely amethyst.

"Well, do I know any tricks or not?" shrilled Mombi, snapping her fingers under Pajuka's bill. "Come on! Let's cross!" She rose stiffly and Snip, taking up the basket, set one foot experimentally upon the jelly. It shook a little under his weight, but seemed firm and solid, so the three stepped out and were soon half way over.

"How about the fish?" asked Pajuka, looking down through the clear, jellied water.

"They'll be jelly fish for a while," snickered Mombi, who was in a fine humor at the trick she had turned. "I wish the Wizard of Oz could see this. I'll wager I can get as much magic out of a cook book as he can out of a whole library of sorcery."

"It certainly looks good enough to eat," admitted Snip. "Wonder if it is?" He scooped up a bit to taste, but it was so salty it choked him. If it was not good to eat it was surely fine to walk on and Snip, bouncing along beside Pajuka, was quite sorry when they reached the other side. "I think traveling's pretty interesting," observed the little button boy, looking back over his shoulder. "Don't you Pajuka?"

The goose sighed. "I used to think so, Snip, but I've traveled so far searching for the King, I'm homesick for my slippers, a quiet old castle and my pipe. Haven't had a smoke since I was a goose," mourned the poor prime minister, rolling his eyes sadly. Snip couldn't help thinking how funny Pajuka would look with a pipe and a pair of slippers. But he stifled this thought quickly.

"Don't you care!" he whispered comfortingly. "You'll find the King and when we reach the Emerald City, I'll tell Ozma all about you," he promised, lowering his voice so Mombi could not hear. "I am sure she'll help us.

"What are you whispering about?" snarled the witch, glaring back suspiciously.

"About a second," whistled Pajuka, soaring into the air. "Hello, what's this?"

"Why, it's the Corners," cried Snip, running ahead to read a large sign suspended from a pussy willow under the great gray walls.

"Catty Corners," announced the sign, in black scratchy letters.

"Catty Corners," hissed the goose. "Well, this is no place for me. Let us fly at once!"

"But I adore cats," declared Mombi and, before anyone could stop her, she thumped hard upon the gates. The walls surrounding Catty Corners formed a huge triangle and were so high that even by bending backward Snip could not see the top. As he straightened up, a door in the gray wall flew open and a simply enormous Tabby Cat, dressed as a guard, seized Pajuka by the wing and Mombi by the arm.

"No boys allowed!" bawled the guard, bristling his whiskers at Snip. Before the little button boy could even wink, the cat had dragged his two companions in and slammed the door. Snip could hear Pajuka hissing and Mombi protesting in a shrill voice and next instant the door flew open and he, himself,

was seized by a cat guard and jerked through.

"He's my prisoner," cried Mombi defiantly, as Snip was lined up beside her. She had no intention of letting Snip out of her clutches. He knew entirely too much for that.

"Well, he's my prisoner now," snarled the guard, giving Snip a shake. Then, looking more closely at Mombi, his eyes began to sparkle with pleasure. "Who are you, beauteous being?" purred the cat, doffing his cap. Pajuka, though badly scared by his predicament, could not restrain a loud chuckle.

"I'm a witch!" answered Mombi, drawing herself up proudly.

"A witch!" cried the second cat guard, releasing his hold on Mombi's arm. "Oh cousin, how splendid! The Queen must know of this."

Throwing back his head he began to yowl in a hundred piercing and alarming cat cries.

"What's he saying?" gasped Snip.

"Sounds like cat fish to me," gurgled Pajuka, ducking his head under his wing.

At the cat guard's call, hundreds of cats began to race toward the prisoners. They were as large as Snip himself, and of every kind and color imaginable. As soon as they saw Mombi, they began to purr with pleasure and delight, rubbing against her knees, knocking her hat sideways and pressing so close that Snip and Pajuka were almost suffocated. Then, forming a triumphant procession, they started for the center of Catty Corners. Mombi, like all witches, was fonder of cats than of anything else and walked along fondling first one and then another, while Snip and Pajuka, still in the clutches of the guards, followed in huge disgust. Several of the cats cast hungry looks at the goose, but most of them were too taken up with Mombi to even notice him.

"Did you ever see such a place?" sniffed the little button boy scornfully. "Why, it's all fences."

Even as he spoke, his cat guard sprang up on a white fence, dragging him along. It was so perfectly unexpected that Snip nearly fell on his nose but, glancing ahead, he saw Mombi nimbly walking the fence between two black cats. Pajuka had no trouble walking the fence either, though he was greatly inconvenienced by the guard who had hold of his wing.

"If I just had a pair of clothes props," sighed Snip, balancing himself precariously.

"Take hold of my tail," advised the guard gruffly, "and if you fall I'll scratch you."

Another cat sprang up behind him and put one paw under his arm, so between the two Snip managed fairly well. He had to keep his eyes so closely on the fence that he did not see as much of Catty Corners as he otherwise might have. But he saw enough to interest him tremendously. A perfect network of fences divided this curious city into a great many little enclosures. Snip would have called them back yards. In each yard was a catnip bed, a pussy willow tree, and a lovely fountain of cream. They passed many ponds well stocked with fish, and Snip shivered uncomfortably as one of the Tabby Cats jumped down from the fence, snatched a gold fish from a pond, and began eating it as if it were a cracker, salting it generously from a shaker he carried around his neck.

"Hateful things," thought the little button boy, looking anxiously ahead to see how Pajuka was faring. "I hope we don't have to stay here long." A sudden yowling and waving of tails told him something

was happening. Stretching his neck, he saw that Mombi had reached the Queen's garden.

"Are you prepared to meet The Imperial and Puissant Pussy?" asked the guard, looking severely over his shoulder.

"Another cat?" groaned Snip.

"Scratch him," hissed a big grey Tom, but the Tabby Cat merely reached down, and clutching Snip by the front of his jacket, jumped down from the fence.

Her Majesty lay luxuriously under a catsup tree. Ten small kittens fanned her with large leaves and there was a Tabby Cat Guard in every corner of the garden. There was not room for all the other cats, so they ranged themselves expectantly on the surrounding fences while Mombi, Pajuka and Snip were brought forward. The Queen, a sleek maltese, opened her eyes languidly as they approached, but at sight of Mombi she sprang up so impulsively, she bumped her head on a catsup bottle.

"Why, you dear, beautiful, dreadful old thing!" purred the Queen, clasping her paws delightedly.

"Dear, beautiful, dreadful old thing!" purred all the other cats, waving their tails approvingly.

"You shall stay and bewitch us forever," murmured her Highness, stroking Mombi's wrinkled cheek affectionately. "But who let this boy in?" she screamed furiously, catching a glimpse of Snip.

"Mean, horrid, naughty little wretch, puller of tails and thrower of stones!" Her eyes flashed so threateningly Snip was really alarmed and began to look around for some way to escape.

"He never pulled a cat-tail in his life," blustered Pajuka indignantly, "except in a swamp!"

"In a swamp?" shrieked the Queen. "What right has he to pull cat-tails in a swamp. Who are you?"

"A Prime Minister when I am myself," answered Pajuka promptly, "but unfortunately just now I am not myself."

"A goose!" purred the cat Queen, licking her lips hungrily. "Ah, it's years since I've tasted a goose. How old are you? How much do you weigh? Are you tender?"

At each dreadful question, her Maltese Majesty drew nearer to Pajuka. Snip looked appealingly at Mombi, but the old witch had forgotten them both and was seated blissfully under the catsup tree, her lap full of kittens.

"As a man I was in my prime, but I'm a very old goose," panted Pajuka, edging nervously away from the greedy Queen.

"I don't believe it," said her Majesty, giving Pajuka a playful poke. "What fun! A guest! A prisoner and a dinner! The witch shall stay, the boy shall be publicly chased and scratched and the goose, ah the goose shall be eaten! You may kiss my paw!" purred her Highness, advancing graciously toward Snip.

"Mombi! Mombi! Do you hear that?" screamed Pajuka wildly. "I'm to be served up for

dinner!"

"Serve you right," yawned the witch drowsily.

"I'll not let them eat you!" shouted Snip, brushing aside the Queen's paw and struggling to free himself from the cat guard.

"Take them away!" commanded the Queen, with a wave of her tail. "And keep tabs on them until wanted."

"You'll be sorry for this!" honked Pajuka. "I'm very bad for cats. If you eat me I'll give you fits."

"Hush!" hissed her Highness haughtily. "You are now the dinner and the dinner is not supposed to converse."

"Come along, dinner!" said the guard gruffly, and dragging Pajuka by the wing and Snip by the arm, he marched them sternly away, while all the inhabitants of Catty Corners howled with derision and delight.

CHAPTER 7

The Magic Pudding

SNIP," wheezed Pajuka mournfully, "when I am cooked and eaten, will you save a few of my feathers for Ozma? And if you find the King will you tell him that old Pajuka was faithful to-to the last?"

In spite of himself the poor goose's voice broke and ended in a great gulp.

"When they get through with me there'll be just enough feathers left to stuff a pillow," choked Pajuka.

"Don't!" begged the little button boy, flinging his arms around his friend's neck. "Besides, if I'm to be chased and scratched by all those cats, there won't be anything left of me at all."

"I'll nip off their tails, I'll snatch out their whiskers!" raged Pajuka, thrusting his bill through the bars of their prison. The two had been thrown unceremoniously into a small summer house at the end of the Queen's garden. It was surrounded by cat guards, so their chances for escape were cut off on every side.

"Maybe something'll happen," sighed Snip, pressing his nose against the slats. It had been late afternoon when they reached Catty Corners and in the gathering gloom the giant cats, parading up and down, looked like some dreadful sort of goblins. Turning back to Pajuka for comfort, Snip was horrified to see that the goose had drawn up one foot and closed his eyes.

"Don't fall asleep, Pajuka," begged the little boy, shaking him frantically. "Don't fall asleep and leave me all alone."

"Can't help it Snip hah hoh! This is what comes of being a goose-hum!" yawned the poor prime minister. He blinked rapidly, stamped both feet and fluttered his feathers, but it was no use. His eyes simply would not stay open.

"Well, if I'm to be eaten," gulped Pajuka sadly, with a last monstrous yawn, "I might as well be asleep anyway." Folding his head away dejectedly under his wing, he stood perfectly still. At this Snip felt so down-hearted that he sat on the floor and took the goose in his lap.

"Wonder what Mombi's doing," he shuddered, trying to catch a glimpse of the old witch through the chinks in the lattice. To tell the truth, Mombi was in as tight a catty corner as Snip. Having indulged her fondness for cats to the fullest extent and, noting with alarm and approach of night, she had finally risen and bidding the Catty Queen an affectionate farewell, declared herself ready to depart. "And the goose and boy must come with me," croaked Mombi, grinning secretly at the joke she had played on them.

"With you," cried the Cat Queen, springing up in alarm. "Why, you dear, ugly old darling, do you suppose I am ever going to let you go? Never! As for the boy-who cares for boys? He shall entertain us all day to-morrow. I'll call out my grand army of Maltesers, and they shall maul and tease him to death. What fun. And the goose! I could hug you for bringing that goose.

"But see here," panted Mombi in alarm, "I need that goose. I'm taking him as a present to Ozma, the Queen."

"Well, I'm a Queen," sniffed the Cat crossly, and I don't give a yowl for Ozma. Come on, let's pluck out his feathers." And away across the garden scampered her Majesty. Mombi picked up her basket and followed in great haste. She knew that without Pajuka she would never recognize the King, nor regain her magic powers. Therefore, though she had no great love for the goose, she must find some way to save him.

"Wait!" puffed the old witch, catching up with the Queen. "Wait! I, myself, will prepare a feast to go with the goose. I am a famous cook and know more about roasts and sauces than anyone in Oz." Mombi rolled her eyes boastfully.

"Do you?" murmured the Imperial Pussy, stopping short and looking admiringly at the old witch.

"Did your Highness ever taste rice cream pudding?" inquired Mombi mysteriously. "No goose should be eaten without a dish of pudding beforehand. Keeps off the mullygrubs. Just let me make you a delicious little rice cream pudding!"

"Rice cream pudding? Why that sounds delicious!" purred the Queen, waving her tail rapturously. "Make enough for us all, dear old ugliness, and I'll take a cat nap while you do."

"Where's the kitchen?" demanded Mombi with a wicked grin. Already she had thought of a way out of her difficulties. Once in the catty kitchen, really only an enclosed corner of the garden with a stone fireplace and iron crane, Mombi set quickly to work. Filling the largest cauldron with rice cream from the fountain, she poured in all the boxes of rice she had in her basket and all the raisins. Then, setting it over the fire, which two tortoise shell cats kept at blazing point, she stirred and muttered and

muttered and stirred, and just before it was done dropped in the contents of another of her purple cans.

Meanwhile, news of the coming treat had spread, and by the time the pudding was finished, the fences were simply crowded with cats, their eyes showing like green balls of fire in the darkness. There were only a few dim lanterns in Catty Corners, for cats can see quite as well by night as by day. Each cat had brought a saucer, and forming in an orderly procession, they lined up before the old witch, while Mombi ladled out helping after helping of the pudding, pausing every now and then to wipe her forehead on her sleeve and grin wickedly to herself.

None of the cats dared eat until the Queen arrived, and when her Highness finally did appear, a long sigh of anticipation went up from the fences. Mombi had saved a particularly large helping for the Queen, and when her Maltese Majesty lowered her chin over her saucer and all the other cats started lapping up the pudding, Mombi could hardly restrain her chuckles. The pudding really was delicious and the Queen lapped faster and faster, as did the rest, so that in scarcely a moment the saucers were quite empty and the company quite the reverse.

With half-closed eyes the Queen lifted her head to thank Mombi but before she could purr a purr, she, and that whole collection of cats, simply catapulted into the air and, while Mombi held her sides and rocked to and fro with malicious merriment, they rolled and tumbled toward the clouds like balloons released from their strings. No wonder! In that purple can was a baking powder powerful enough to raise an army-baking powder that the old witch had been collecting and refining for twenty years.

"Hah," snorted Mombi, rubbing her hands with satisfaction. Leaning over the fountain, she took a long drink of cream, for stirring the pudding had made her mighty thirsty. Then, without thought of her luckless victims, she picked up her basket and hobbled off to the summer house. Snip, after waiting in terror for the cats to come for Pajuka, had finally dropped into an uneasy slumber, and when Mombi flashed a small lantern in his eyes he almost jumped out of his jacket.

"Come along, you little lazy bones," grumbled the witch, jerking him roughly by the sleeve. "Is that silly old goose asleep too?"

"I'll carry him," said Snip stiffly and, bending over, he picked Pajuka carefully up in his arms. He was quite an armful, but never stirred nor wakened at all. Snip longed to tell Mombi what he thought of her, but she looked so fierce he decided not to try it.

"Where are the cats?" he shivered, tiptoeing nervously after the old witch. Mombi waved her stick aloft, and you can imagine the astonishment of the little boy to see a perfect cloud of cats sailing across the moon.

"Gave 'em rice pudding and they riz," wheezed the old witch gleefully. Having no one else to boast to, Mombi condescended to explain her trick to Snip. Snip, on his part, was glad to escape from the catty creatures, but he could not help feeling a bit sorry for them.

"How long will they have to stay up there?" he inquired curiously.

"Till it rains," grunted Mombi, swinging the lantern carelessly. "But come on, I can't stand here talking all night. We'll never reach the Emerald City at this rate."

"Anyway," thought Snip, stepping along carefully so as not to wake Pajuka, "anyway they can eat their supper in the milky way and won't it be raining cats when they do come down though!"

While Mombi stopped to straighten her hat, Snip took a long drink from one of the cream fountains. "Nobody knows when we'll get anything to eat, said the little button boy to himself.

"Are we going to travel all night?" he puffed, running to catch up with Mombi.

"Mind your own buttons," hissed the old witch, lapsing into her usual ill-temper, and as she refused to say another word, there was nothing to do but follow the uncertain flicker of her lantern. After an hour of zig-zagging along the fences, they reached the other side, unbolted the great iron doors in the wall and found themselves in another forest.

Snip thought surely Mombi would stop, but the old witch went muttering and mumbling along, her eyes gleaming like hot coals in the darkness. Every once in a while, she would glance sideways at Snip in a way that caused him great uneasiness. To tell the truth, Mombi had about decided to rid herself of the little button boy. He knew too much and might run off and tell Ozma her plans before she could reach the Emerald City, herself. With Pajuka's help, Mombi meant to find the old King, if she could, but when he had restored her magic powers Mombi intended to be the real ruler of Oz.

So, hurrying along through the inky forest, she began casting about in her mind for a way to destroy Snip.

"I'll wait till I reach the center of the forest," hissed Mombi, stumping along under the silent trees, "and then

"What did you say?" asked Snip anxiously.

"Nothing," grunted Mombi, smiling sourly to herself, "at least nothing that concerns you.

CHAPTER 8

The Mysterious Message

SCRAPS, the Patch Work Girl, danced crazily down the flower-bordered path in Ozma's lovely garden in the Emerald City, shouting this verse:

"Hank hankers for a hanky

To blow his funny nose,

Hank hankers for a hanky,

I hanker for a rose!"

"I do not," brayed Hank, Betsy Bobbins' little mule, flapping his ears sulkily. "You don't know what you are singing about, Scraps. Go away and stop jeering me. How could I use a hanky, you silly girl?"

"Hank, you're a crank!" shouted Scraps, and capered on down the path, stopping to chin herself on a tulip tree and dropping in a wobbly heap beside the little table where Ozma, Betsy Bobbin and Trot were having breakfast.

"You shouldn't tease Hank like that," said Ozma, looking reproachfully at Scraps over her gold breakfast cup.

"I'll tease, I'll tease,
whom I please,
I'll cross my eyes
and cross my knees!"

chortled Scraps, and she looked so comical doing both of these crossings at once that the little girls simply burst into laughter, while Hank, with a snort of disgust, galloped off at full speed.

"You're awful," sighed Betsy Bobbin, nearly choking on her biscuit, and Betsy was pretty nearly right, for this ridiculous maiden who lived luxuriously in Ozma's palace was made entirely of patchwork. She had been cut from an old quilt, stuffed and sewn together by a wizard's wife who intended her for a servant. But when the wizard mixed up her brains, a lot of fun and cleverness had got in, so that Scraps had refused to be a servant and had run off to the Emerald City. She was so comical and entertaining that Ozma had allowed her to remain at the capitol, and Scraps is now one of the most celebrated characters in the castle.

Betsy Bobbin was a little girl from the United States. She and Hank had been ship-wrecked on the shores of a strange land near Oz and, after some terrible adventures with the old Gnome King, had reached Oz itself and been taken in by the kind-hearted little Queen. Trot also had come from America and liked Oz so well she had never returned home. These two, with Princess Dorothy, are the closest friends of the fairy ruler, for Ozma herself is only a little girl fairy, and these four together have the merriest times imaginable.

Living in a green stone castle studded with emeralds is fun enough, dear knows, but living in a green stone castle with forty-nine courtiers, thirty-nine footmen, thirty-seven handmen, twenty-six serving maids, ten cooks and a flock of pages is luxury indeed, especially in a magical land where adventures are liable to happen every few minutes. Why, it's the most fun yet!

Perhaps Dorothy is Ozma's prime favorite, for Dorothy was the first little girl to discover Oz and has been so mixed up in its magical history that Ozma would scarcely know how to rule her interesting subjects without her help. It was of Dorothy that Ozma was thinking, as she watched Scraps turning reckless handsprings under the tulip trees.

"I wonder when Dorothy will return?" sighed the little Queen, pushing back her chair and signalling for the thirty-ninth footman to remove the gold breakfast plates. Dorothy had gone on a short visit to Perhaps City and already the others were longing for her return.

"Let's ask the Scarecrow," proposed Betsy, waving to the jolly straw man who, arm-in-arm with Sir Hokus of Pokes, was coming down the path. Both these delightful fellows are great friends of Dorothy's. In fact she discovered them. The Scarecrow she had lifted down from a pole on her very first trip to Oz. He had accompanied her to the Emerald City and been given a splendid set of brains by the Wizard of Oz, so that he is one of the wittiest and most able of Ozma's courtiers. He has a cozy corn-ear castle in the Winkie Country, but prefers to spend most of his time in the capitol with the girls. Sir Hokus had been rescued from Pokes by Dorothy on another of her wonderful adventures, and since the Knight had taken up his residence in the palace Ozma felt more secure than ever before, for Sir Hokus was a splendid swordsman and feared neither man nor monster. It is people like Scraps, Sir Hokus and the Scarecrow who make life in the Emerald City so jolly and so different.

"Yoo hoo! Don't you think it's time Dorothy was back?" called Betsy, as the two came nearer.

"High time! High time!" answered the Scarecrow, waving his old blue hat up at the clock in the tallest tower of the castle. "And we'll have a high time when she does come," he smiled gaily. "I've thought up a dozen new games and.... What's that?" cried the Scarecrow, interrupting himself suddenly and blinking his painted eyes so fast that Betsy bounded out of her chair.

"What's that?" echoed the little Queen of Oz, springing up in alarm. Something gold and brilliant had flashed through the air and fallen upon the walk.

"A feather!" puffed Sir Hokus. "Odds goblins and hoblins, a feather!" He stooped creakily to pick it up, but as he did the golden quill righted itself and began to move rapidly across the marble walk.

"It's writing!" gasped Trot, clutching the Scarecrow by the arm, and in dazed fascination -' they watched the feather tracing a sentence. When it had set down five words, it made a little gold dot and fell lifelessly at Ozma's feet.

"Danger-- Go to Morrow today!" stuttered the Scarecrow, reading the golden message aloud.

"How now," thundered Sir Hokus, letting his visor fall with a crash, "what means this message?"

"Go tomorrow!" gulped the Scarecrow, clapping on his hat and squinting down at the golden legend on the walk.

"Not tomorrow, today," corrected Betsy Bobbin breathlessly.

"But if we go today, how can we go tomorrow?" asked Ozma, growing more bewildered every minute.

"Danger!" shuddered Trot, pointing a trembling finger at the first word.

"What's all the excitement?" demanded Scraps, dancing up on one toe. Then, seeing they were all staring down at the marble, she bent over and read the message aloud herself.

"Go to-morrow to-day. It can never be done!

Just to think of it gives me a pain in the bun."

screamed the Patch Work Girl, clapping her hand to her cotton forehead.

"Hush, Scraps!" begged Ozma. "This is serious!"

"Someone is delirious, or they'd never write such nonsense, declared Scraps defiantly. "What are you going to do about it?"

"Think!" mumbled the Scarecrow, dropping down on a gold garden bench.

"Send for the Wizard!" advised Betsy Bobbin, jumping up and down in her excitement. "Wait! I'll get him!"

"It's a goose quill," announced Sir Hokus, as Betsy ran off toward the palace. He had picked up the golden feather and was examining it carefully.

"A goose quill?" gasped Ozma. "Why what can that mean? Oh dear, I do wish Dorothy were back."

"My gooseness!" giggled Scraps. "No wonder it's a silly message. Do you know any geese?"

"None but you!" sniffed Trot, putting her arms about Ozma.

"Silence, wench!" commanded Sir Hokus, pushing Scraps aside and seating himself beside the Scarecrow. "Methinks dark deeds are brewing here. Hast thought of anything friend?"

"Not yet," sighed the Scarecrow, rubbing his forehead sadly with his wobbly finger. "Let me think some more.

All were silent until Betsy Bobbin came hurrying back, bringing with her the Wizard of Oz and Tik Tok. As everyone in Oz knows, Tik Tok is another great celebrity, a machine man of burnished copper who can talk, walk and even think when properly wound. Betsy was winding up his thick key, as she ran along, for Tik Tok's brains, in spite of their wheels, worked quite as well as the Scarecrow's, and there certainly was a lot of thinking to be done.

"You say it was a golden goose feather?" panted the little Wizard of Oz, quickening his steps. "A goose feather! Humph!" Next instant he was bending over the strange inscription on the walk, while Ozma and Trot breathlessly explained just how and when it had all happened.

"To-morrow to-day!" murmured the Wizard, mopping his bald head with his green hanky. "Why that's impossible, there's some trick to it."

The Wizard drew a small green book from his pocket. It was the book of magic messages and the little company waited anxiously while he flipped over the pages. But although every other kind of

message was touched upon, there was nothing at all about goose feathers. With a sigh, the Wizard returned the book to his pocket, and dropping upon his knees began to examine the letters through his smallifying glass.

Tik Tok, except for the chug and whirr of his machinery, had been perfectly quiet. Now, leaning over so far he nearly tumbled on his copper nose, he began to read the message aloud.

"Go-to-morrow-to-day! Go-o-morrow-to-day!" rasped Tik Tok, in his harsh rasping voice, over and over and over, until Ozma and Betsy clapped hands to their ears and Trot begged him to stop. "That's funny-," ticked the copper man at last. "It tells us when to go-but not-where. Too many times and-no-place, Go-to-mor--

Whirr-click! Tik Tok's voice ran down and the sentence stopped in mid air.

"Thank goodness!" cried Betsy Bobbin fervently.

"Well, you'd better thank Tik Tok," spluttered the Scarecrow, leaping off the golden bench. "Hurrah! I have it now. One's a time and one's a place. Is there a Kingdom called Morrow anywhere in Oz, my dear?"

"Morrow!" exclaimed Ozma, "Why, that does sound familiar, somehow. Morrow? Yes, I feel sure there is."

"Get a map," ordered the Scarecrow in great excitement, and all but the Wizard sat down and smiled at the cleverness of the wise straw man.

CHAPTER 9

In the Castle of Morrow

THE Wizard of Oz knew the geography of Ozma's wonderful land by heart and he remembered the Kingdom of Morrow perfectly. He felt a bit jealous that the Scarecrow was about to solve the mystery without his help and so he popped a small wishing pill into his mouth and began speaking rapidly in magic.

Now magic is a language which I do not profess to understand, but the results of the Wizard's speech were instantaneous and astonishing. So swiftly that the hair of the three little girls was nearly jerked from their heads, so swiftly that Sir Hokus lost his sword and Ozma her crown, they were all hurled through the air and dashed down in a very short time on the steps of an ancient and gloomy castle.

Its once splendid garden was choked up with weeds. Vines had run up and over the entire structure, covering even the windows and chimneys with a waving curtain of green. Owls hooted dismally from the towers and the scurry and scamper of frightened feet told that many little forested animals had made themselves at home within.

"Mercy," gasped Betsy Bobbin, examining anxiously a long scratch on her knee, "how did we get here?"

"Where are we?" inquired Sir Hokus, blinking very fast from his seat upon a stone lion, where he had landed a little too suddenly and emphatically for complete comfort.

"We are in Morrow," replied the Wizard, rising from the last step out of the castle and dusting off his green trousers. "In Morrow, by my express wish and Dr. Nikidik's wishing pills."

"Well, you might have told us we were coming," said Trot a bit crossly, beginning to look around for her side comb.

"Morrow!" murmured Ozma, walking dreamily up the castle steps. "Why I've been here before, dozens and dozens of times."

"Got another pill, Wizard?" asked Scraps grimly.

"Ahem! No, I don't believe I have," coughed the little man nervously. "Why?"

"I wanna go home," shuddered the Patch Work Girl, looking fearfully at the dismal forest surrounding the castle and a flock of black birds circling ominously overhead. "I wanna go home!"

"You should think before you wish, old fellow," gulped the Scarecrow weakly. "Betsy, my dear, will you give me a shake. All of my straw has fallen into my left boot. And where's Tik Tok, pray?"

"I thought he'd better stay home," replied the Wizard, looking around uneasily. Now that they were really in Morrow, he began to doubt the wisdom of his quick wish. Why had he not thought to bring his magic bag or another wishing pill in case of danger?

"A rare and imposing old edifice!" observed Sir Hokus, dismounting stiffly from the stone lion, and looking up curiously at the castle.

"Well, now that we are here, we might as well look around," puffed the Scarecrow, more cheerful since Betsy had shaken him up and smoothed out his stuffing. "Come along!"

Ozma was already standing before the dull golden doors, the only portion of the castle not overgrown with vines. Stepping up behind her, Sir Hokus lifted the huge knocker and let it fall with a great clank against the tarnished metal.

"What ho, within!" roared the good Knight lustily. But only a hollow echo and the derisive hoot of an owl came shivering out to them.

"What makes you think it is a Ho?" chattered Scraps nervously.

"I wish you'd never wished us here.

This castle's full of spooks, I fear!"

finished the Patch Work Girl, shaking her finger reproachfully at the Wizard.

"Fear nothing," boomed Sir Hokus grandly, "I will protect you." Putting his mailed shoulder to the doors, he pressed with all his might. The bolts had evidently not been drawn and when the three little girls and the Wizard added their strength to his, the doors flew open so suddenly they all tumbled through together. Three jack rabbits and a tiny fawn leaped through a broken window pane as the doors crashed open and several bats, shaken from their hold on the beamed ceiling by the jar, began to circle round and round, screeching dismally. The hall had once been furnished with great splendor and magnificence, but now everything was covered with cobwebs, dust and decay. The dim green light filtering in through the vine covered windows made everything seem more ghastly still.

"I wanna go home!" whispered Scraps plaintively.

"Oh!" wailed Betsy Bobbin, hiding her face in the Scarecrow's coat, "I don't like this."

"Shoo!" couched the Scarecrow, stamping his foot at a flock of mice that came scurrying across the floor and whirling his hat about his head to keep off the bats. "Shoo, I tell you!"

"What do you s'pose anyone wanted us to come here for?" groaned Trot, clinging nervously to Scraps.

"Well, there must be some reason," answered Ozma thoughtfully. "I seem to remember this castle." Disregarding the grime and dust, the lovely little Queen walked slowly across the hall and sat down on a golden chest beside the long table. Sir Hokus, finding nothing better to fight than mice and bats, began briskly to clear the room of the pests, while Trot, Betsy and the Patch Work Girl tiptoed here and there talking in tense whispers, for in the silence of the deserted castle their words echoed and re-echoed unpleasantly. Having assured themselves that there was nothing of interest in the great hall, Sir Hokus, the Wizard and the Scarecrow went bravely off to examine the rest of the castle.

"I wish they'd come back," whispered Trot, after they'd been gone about five minutes. "Oooh, what's that?"

"The wind," quavered Betsy doubtfully.

"I don't believe it," shuddered Scraps, tripping over the fire irons and sprawling upon the hearth. "It's a spook. I wanna go home! Just look at me!" Betsy and Trot giggled nervously, for Scraps, covered with grime and soot from her fall, was enough to make anyone laugh.

"Never mind," comforted Ozma, "I'll have you dry cleaned when we get back home, but now I'm trying to think, so please do be quiet."

Quiet! Scarcely was the word out of her mouth, before there was such a shivering slam overhead that all three girls jumped with terror and Scraps, for greater security leaped clear onto the table, touching as she did so a hidden spring in the top. At this there was a blinding flash and while Ozma, Betsy and Trot clung desperately together and Scraps gave another jump that carried her clear to the chandelier, the center of the table rose up before their eyes, disclosing a long silver casket.

"Don't touch it!" warned the Patch Work Girl, swinging dizzily 'round and 'round.

"A goblin. a goblin will jump out and bite us, There's a giant upstairs and he's coming to smite

us!"

Someone certainly was coming down the stairs. Scarcely daring to look, they waited anxiously for the next happening.

"What befell?" It was Sir Hokus of Pokes and not a giant who stuck his head through the doorway. "Did'st call maidens?" asked the Knight, looking up at Scraps in vague disapproval.

Without stopping to explain what had frightened them, Ozma pointed a trembling finger at the silver casket and before any of them could beg him not to, Sir Hokus strode forward and opened the mysterious chest. Scraps hid her head in her arm. Then, hearing no screams nor explosions, she finally screwed up enough courage to look down. The Wizard of Oz and the Scarecrow had returned and they were all staring in amazement at a green velvet robe which Sir Hokus had taken from the chest.

"Royal robe of his Majesty, the King of Oz!" boomed the Knight, reading from a small tag on the ermine collar.

"The King of Oz?" choked Ozma, clasping her hands in excitement. "Why that's my father, and I remember now. This is the hunting lodge where we used to hide from Mombi when I was a little girl!"

"But I thought Mombi destroyed your father when she turned you to a boy," puffed Betsy Bobbin, her eyes sticking out with astonishment and surprise.

"So did I," muttered the little Wizard. He always felt uneasy and unhappy when the old witch was mentioned, for he, himself, had given Ozma into Mombi's keeping when he took possession of the Kingdom. The old witch had already spirited away the little girl's father and Ozma herself was too young to rule. But the Wizard, changed very much since those old days, realized now how wrong it had been and did not like to recall the part he had played in the affair at all.

"Well, no wonder you remembered the castle," put in Trot.

"But wait!" cried Sir Hokus hoarsely. "There is more." And turning over the tag he read: "This robe has been preserved by the Fairy Lurline, and if placed upon the King's shoulders with Incantation No. 986 from the Green Book of Magic, will restore him to his proper shape. If the incantation is used without the robe a great disaster will befall."

"Who's Lurline?" asked Trot, her eyes winking very fast indeed.

"Why Lurline is my Fairy Godmother and the Queen of the fairy band we are all descended from," explained Ozma breathlessly. "Oh girls! To think my father is really alive!" The delighted little ruler hugged Betsy and Trot so hard that they had to squeal for mercy.

"I should think you'd rather be Queen yourself," sniffed Scraps, dropping sulkily from the chandelier and coming over to stare at the King's robe. "He'll want to boss you 'round and make you go to bed at eight, wear rubbers and all that other fatherish stuff. Let's go home and not bother with him. Who wants a King anyway, I like you!"

Betsy looked shocked at the Patch Work Girl's heartless speech, but Ozma, paying no heed to Scraps, began to confer excitedly with the Wizard.

"Who sent the quill? Where shall we look first? What does it mean by the Green Book of

"Magic?" she asked, one question following another so fast the Wizard blinked with discomfort.

"If you take my advice," observed the Scarecrow, rubbing his nose wisely, "you'll return immediately to the Emerald City. Once there we have but to look in the Magic Picture to discover the whereabouts of your royal parent."

Among the many treasures in Ozma's palace is the Magic Picture, in which you may see anyone you wish by merely expressing the desire to see them. It also shows the country and exact situation they are in, so you can see how sensible the Scarecrow's suggestion really was.

"But what made that terrible racket upstairs?" demanded Scraps, suddenly remembering her scare.

"Oh that!" Sir Hokus shuffled his feet in embarrassment. "I fell through a trap door into a closet full of tins," explained the Knight sheepishly.

"It's a good thing you did," laughed Betsy Bobbin, "for if you hadn't frightened Scraps we might never have found the silver chest at all."

"Now that we have found it," shivered Trot, "let's go. It's cold in here."

"And let's hurry!" cried Ozma, seizing the Scarecrow affectionately by the arm. "Oh, I can scarcely wait to see my father."

"Why didn't you bring along another wishing pill, Wizard?" sighed Betsy. "We're in Morrow, sure enough, but where is Morrow? And how do we get back to the Emerald City, anyway?" No one could answer Betsy's question, for it had been so long since Ozma had been in the old castle she remembered nothing of its location.

"We'll have to walk, I s'pose," said the Scarecrow, detaching a cobweb from his ear, "and the sooner we start, the sooner we'll arrive."

"Right, as usual!" approved the Knight, taking the Scarecrow by the arm. "Forward for the King and for Oz!"

So, after another short look about, the seven adventurers closed the castle doors and began to make their way cautiously through the deserted park.

"If I only knew who sent the feather," murmured Ozma, holding up her lace skirts to keep them from catching on the bushes and thorns.

"I'll bet it was your Fairy Godmother," said Trot, skipping along excitedly.

"Well, I wish the goose had come with the feather," sighed Betsy Bobbin. "I'm hungry as the Hungry Tiger!"

"If you were stuffed with cotton,
you'd never have to eat."

I'm glad I'm made of patch work
and not of bone and meat."

sang Scraps, dancing ahead in her ridiculous fashion.

"There's a house!" called Betsy, tugging the Knight suddenly by the arm and pointing to a small red building.

"Oh!" cried Ozma, clasping her hands, "Perhaps someone lives there who can tell us about my father!"

"He may be near and he may be farther," giggled Scraps starting to run toward the little red house. "Come on everybody!"

Led by the Patch Work Girl, the little company hurried toward the little red house. No one was to be seen at the windows, and when Sir Hokus pounded on the door there was no answer.

"We are wasting time here," said the Scarecrow at last. "Let us be on our way." And so the homeward march was resumed.

CHAPTER 10

Dorothy and the Dummy

ON the same bright morning that the golden goose feather had come flashing down into Ozma's garden in the Emerald City, Dorothy had said goodbye to her old friends in Perhaps City and started gaily homeward.

Her visit on Maybe Mountain, where old Peer Haps holds court and the Forgetful Poet makes verses from morning until night, had been so interesting and jolly that Dorothy still felt happy and she went skipping down the steep mountain path almost as fast as the little brook that rushed along at her side. As she skipped along she sang this merry ditty:

"I saw one day, the last of May,

A foolish and absurd

Old yellow fellow calling 'Hello,

I'm a banana bird!"

"A banana bird! My eyes grew blurred;

I took to my toes and heels,

Then away he flew with a flap or two,

Of his yellow banana peels."

"I must try to remember that for Scraps, Dorothy giggled softly to herself. Her head was full of the Forgetful Poet's ridiculous rhymes, and she was so busy remembering them and the many bits of news she had for Ozma that she reached the bottom of the mountain in almost no time and, without noticing where she was going, turned into an inviting small lane. There was a sign swinging from a yellow post at the head of the lane, but Dorothy never saw it. She knew she was in the familiar Winkie Country, for the wind mills, flapping lazily in the morning breeze, were yellow, the houses were yellow and if that were not proof enough, the lane was full of daisies and buttercups and edged with golden peach and pear trees.

"I don't believe," sighed Dorothy, hurrying happily along under the lovely branches, "I don't believe there is any place so interesting as Oz. How pretty this road is!"

Stooping down, she scooped up a bit of the sand that made the bed of the lane sparkle like silver in the sunlight. It was silver, to be perfectly truthful, and with a little smile Dorothy slipped some into her pocket.

"How surprised anyone in Kansas would be to find silver dust in the road," thought the little girl, recalling her old home with a little chuckle of amusement. "No, nothing like this ever happens in America at all, and yet-" Dorothy paused to pick an unusually large buttercup and twirl it absently under her chin, "and yet I sometimes wish I were in America again, just to see

Wheee-e! Off flew her hat, up flew her heels and in a whirl of silver dust and peach blossoms, off flew Dorothy herself. Off, up, away and down again, so swiftly she had not even time to swallow.

"Thirty miles to Hollywood," said the sign near the huge rock where she sat blinking with shock and astonishment.

"Hollywood!" panted Dorothy. "Why that's in California and California's in the United States. But how did I get here?" There was no one to answer her question, and as she couldn't answer it herself she jumped up, smoothed out her dress and looked anxiously about. A smooth white road ran evenly ahead, one side sloped down into a deep ravine, on the other side was a long, uninteresting stretch of meadow. Through the trees at the bottom of the ravine, Dorothy caught a glimpse of some houses.

Feeling terribly puzzled and not entirely pleased, she left the road and started down through the trees. Halfway down, she paused to make sure she was going toward the houses, when the furious

clatter of hoofs on the road above made her glance up in dismay. A great company of horsemen, armed with pikes, staves, swords and pitch forks were galloping pell mell along the highway. Giving a scream of fright, Dorothy saw them turn and plunge down the ravine. With a smash and a crash they came riding upon her. Gasping in terror, Dorothy sprang behind a big tree and in a whirl of sticks, dust and color the horsemen pounded past. They were dressed in green doublets and hose. They wore wide feathered hats and were not at all the sort of folk Dorothy expected to find in America.

With her hand pressed to her heart, Dorothy peered around the tree. As she did so the wild riders reined up short and two of the most villainous looking snatched a green-cloaked figure from the saddle and hurled him violently over the cliff. Then swinging their horses round, they galloped off as suddenly as they had come, leaving Dorothy, as she afterwards explained to Sir Hokus of Pokes, perfectly petrified. Not until the last green doublet flashed out of sight did she dare stir. Then breathlessly she tiptoed to the edge of the cliff and looked over.

"Oooh-they've killed him!" gasped Dorothy, in horrified tones. Now many another small girl would have run off at once, but Dorothy had been in too many strange adventures for that. Instead she ran just as fast as she could down the steep, stony path to the bottom of the ravine. There on the stones, with his head in a shallow brook, lay the unfortunate rider. Close beside him was a great jewel-studded crown.

"A king!" marvelled Dorothy, who had met a great many monarchs in Oz. "But what is he doing here? And why?"

Holding her breath, she leaned over and touched the quiet figure. Then, taking her courage in both hands, she seized him by the arms and dragged him out of the brook. He came so suddenly and unexpectedly that Dorothy fell over backwards. More mystified than ever, she picked herself up.

"Mercy!" stuttered the little girl, turning him over gingerly. "He's not alive at all; he's stuffed. Why he's only a dummy."

Half relieved and half disappointed, she gazed into the bland face of the fallen king. It was a handsomely painted face, which even the brook mud could not entirely spoil, and it was topped by a splendid silver wig. But what on earth did it all mean? If Dorothy had been in Oz she might have found it more understandable, for strange things are always happening in Oz. But in America! Dorothy could not puzzle it out. Sitting down on a fallen tree she stared at the dummy in perfect astonishment. How had she come here herself? How was she to get back to the Emerald City? Who were the wild green riders, and why had they flung the dummy over the cliff?

"I wish," sighed Dorothy at last, looking pensively at the long green figure stretched so solemnly at her feet, "I wish you were alive and then maybe

"Maybe what?" wheezed the dummy, raising his head about an inch and blinking at her curiously. "Say, who pulled me out of the brook?"

Dorothy gave a little scream and then, recovering herself and swallowing hard, answered breathlessly, "I did!"

"Well, I'm supposed to be dead," puffed the dummy reproachfully. "Try to get that through your hair, can't you? I've just been thrown over the cliff by the revolutionists. You shouldn't have rescued me, little girl. It will spoil the picture. Is there a camera man anywhere about?"

"Camera?" gasped Dorothy faintly, "Oh, I don't know." It had been a long time since Dorothy had been in America, and there had been very few moving pictures in those old days on the Kansas farm. But Trot, who had come to Oz from San Francisco, had told Dorothy a lot about the screen stars and moving picture stunts. As she recalled Trot's stories, Dorothy clapped her hands. Smiling at the dummy she said, "I know! You're a moving picture dummy, aren't you?"

"Right the first time," said the dummy, as he raised his head another inch and smiled approvingly at Dorothy. "I take all the risks," he explained complacently. "I fall for the stars. Now this star was a foolish old King, but the last star I fell for was a shooting star-a cow-boy, you know. I was thrown from a horse under a stampeding herd of steers," he mused dreamily, "and had to be entirely remade.

"But you had better run along now, little girl. I'm supposed to be dead. It doesn't hurt," he observed graciously, as Dorothy continued to stare at him in amazement. "I've died a hundred times and know all about it. Run along now, like a good child." Lowering his head, he settled down resignedly in the mud and stared stolidly up at the sky.

"Well, of course if you prefer to be dead," began Dorothy a bit stiffly, "I'll go. But why you should want to lie there in the mud, when the sun is shining and everything so nice and interesting, I don't see. You're not dead at all. You're as alive as I am!"

The dummy sat bolt upright at Dorothy's words and started to pinch himself curiously. "Why so I am," he puffed, rubbing his nose thoughtfully with his stuffed and pudgy finger. "Sit down again my dear, until I get used to the idea of it, will you? It feels very odd and dangerous!" He shook one leg, then the other and rose unsteadily to his feet.

"Hurrah!" cried Dorothy. "Why I believe you can walk. Here, lean on this." She thrust a stick into the dummy's hand and after a few uncertain wobblings, he began to pace briskly up and down, his green velvet cloak slapping merrily at his heels. Dorothy was so interested in his progress that she almost forgot how ridiculous it was for a dummy to be alive, but as he lowered himself carefully to the log beside her, she began to wonder again how it had all happened.

"Were you ever alive before?" asked Dorothy curiously.

The dummy shook his head. "If talking and walking around like this is being alive, then I never have," said the dummy positively. "What shall I do now?"

"Why anything you like," laughed Dorothy, beginning to enjoy herself.

"But a dummy can only do as he's told," sighed the stuffed king doubtfully. "And who are you my dear? Have you run off to go into the movies?" He looked at Dorothy critically from all sides. "Not bad at all," he murmured approvingly. "They'll be glad to get you, I'm sure. Just stay here with me and presently they will come in a truck and collect us. Yes, that's the ticket, we'll wait until we are collected."

"Well, I'm not a ticket," giggled Dorothy, "and I don't want to be collected or go into the movies either. I'm going straight back to Oz, as soon as I can."

"Oz?" queried the dummy, pressing his finger to his forehead. "Is that a place or a tonic?"

"It's a place," sputtered Dorothy. "Oh dear, wouldn't Ozma be surprised to see you! You know, you're awfully like Scraps and the Scarecrow."

"They sound rather awful," smiled the dummy, folding his cloak around him dubiously. "Are they dummies too?"

"No, but they're stuffed," explained Dorothy, leaning over to poke him experimentally in the chest. "You talk very queerly. I do wonder what you are stuffed with!"

"Hair, I think," yawned the dummy indifferently, and leaning over he picked up his crown and set it jauntily upon the side of his head. "I wouldn't go back to that Oz place if I were you," he advised earnestly. "Stay here and you can see a moving picture every day - exciting and adventurous stuff too."

"But what's the fun of looking at other folks having adventures," sniffed Dorothy. "In Oz we have adventures ourselves, and in Oz I'm a Princess and live in a castle."

The dummy turned and looked at her respectfully. "A Princess," he murmured in a faint voice. "Oh!"

"Have you any name?" asked Dorothy, rather ashamed of her boast about being a Princess.

"Well, there's a number on the back of my neck, but I don't think I have any name, answered the stuffed man uneasily. "I'm just a dummy, you know."

"But I wouldn't like to call you a dummy," said Dorothy gently.

"Well that's what I am," insisted the stuffed king cheerfully, "a regular dummy."

Tiptoeing round back of him, Dorothy pulled out a little tag on the back of his collar. "202-B-E-10-B-47," read the little girl. "My what a long number."

"Yes, isn't it," replied the dummy proudly. "Couldn't you call me by that?"

"I could never remember it," objected Dorothy. "Let-me-see, I might call you Clifford cause you fell off a cliff, or Cal, 'cause I found you in California? Do you know, you are dreadfully humpy in spots. Humpy! Why I believe I'll call you Humpy!" cried Dorothy, clapping her hands softly.

"Oooh! Ouch! What's that?" In sudden terror Dorothy clutched at her left shoe.

"I don't care what you call me, but I'd call you very odd!" said the dummy in alarm. "You've grown at least a foot while I've been looking at you. People in this country are supposed to stay the same size," he muttered, edging away uneasily. But Dorothy scarcely heard him. There was a frightful pain in her heart and both shoes pinched so terribly that she screamed aloud. At the same instant all the buttons flew off the back her dress.

"Are you going to burst?" asked the dummy anxiously.

"Oh! Oh! I'm afraid so," gasped the little girl, clutching herself about the waist. At each word she shot up another inch, for Dorothy, who had lived in the Fairy Land of Oz for many years, was suddenly growing up.

In Oz, no one ever grows up, but in America Dorothy would be quite a young lady by this time and, removed from the magical influences of that magical land, she was growing all at once and

finding it, as most of the rest of us do, an exceedingly uncomfortable business. Her screams as she grew taller and taller were so piteous that Humpy fell off the log.

"Help! Help! Help!" wailed the dummy, beating his flimsy arms up and down among the leaves.

"Oh! Oh! Oh!" panted Dorothy desperately. "I can't stand this another minute. I wish I were back. I wish I were back!"

Next moment there was not a sound in the ravine, nor a person, nor even a dummy. Only a startled squirrel ran up and down the log, chattering with fright and annoyance. Certainly he had seen two people on that log. Well, where were they now? He frisked his tail, he wiggled his nose and scratched his head anxiously. Then, with a little bounce, he gave it up and went off to crack some nuts for supper.

CHAPTER 11

A Real Oz Adventure

"The last thing I remember," muttered the dummy thickly, "was a little girl shooting up like a fountain. Now what happened after that?" Dorothy raised her head and looked cautiously in the direction from which the voice was coming. The dummy lay, face down, in a heap of leaves and, without making any attempt to rise, went stuffily on with the conversation. "I don't mind falling for stars, but being flung around like a bean bag for a person who is one size this minute and another size the next is all wrong. I wonder where she is now!"

"Here I am," called Dorothy breathlessly, rolling out of a pile of leaves on the other side of him. "How do you s'pose we got here?"

"Little again!" groaned the dummy, just lifting his head long enough to look at her, and then letting it drop back among the leaves. "Little again!"

"Oh, am I?" Dorothy jumped up in great excitement and began measuring herself as best she could. Her stockings were stretched and torn, her dress was ripped in several seams and minus all of its buttons. But outside of this she was her old, or rather her young, sweet self again.

"Why we must be back in Oz," sighed Dorothy, looking with deep relief at a stretch of purple hills in the background. "This is the Gilliken Country."

"Are you still the same size, or are you going to shoot up into a young lady again? Don't shoot," begged the dummy quickly. "It makes me nervous!"

"Well, I don't know," said Dorothy doubtfully. To tell the truth the little girl had not had time to think at all, nor did she quite realize that she was one age in Oz and another age in America. "I'll have to ask the Wizard about it when we get back to the Emerald City," she sighed, with a very puzzled expression. "It's all very funny, don't you think so, Humpy?"

"Can't get it through my hair at all," puffed the dummy. Sitting up stiffly he reached for his crown. "Where are we now and when does the next reel begin?"

Instead of answering Dorothy plumped down among the leaves and, with her elbows on her knees, stared thoughtfully at the dummy.

"I wish I knew how you came to be alive, and how we got back to Oz," mused Dorothy slowly. There was a flash and flutter in the air and down at her feet dropped a crisp white card. Humpy promptly toppled over backward and Dorothy, herself, gave a little gasp of surprise.

"By wishing," said the card in pink letters, just as if it had heard her questions. Below there was some smaller printing and picking up the card Dorothy quickly read on: "Wish Way is at the foot of Maybe Mountain. This morning you were on Wish Way. You put some of the silver wishing sand in your pocket. You wished yourself in America."

"Mercy!" cried Dorothy, dropping the card in her astonishment. "Why so I did, and I wished you were alive, and I wished we were back and now I'm going to wish us both straight to the Emerald City. I was on Wish Way once before and know all about wishing."

"Wait! Wait a minute," panted the dummy, clutching his crown. "I'm used to being flung about, to dying and all that Sort of thing, but this wishing business makes me breathless. Wait!"

Dorothy had already made her wish and, closing her eyes, sat perfectly still. After a moment she opened them but nothing at all had happened. She and Humpy still sitting on the pile of leaves and the white card had vanished. Blinking rapidly, Dorothy felt in her pocket. "No wonder it didn't work," muttered Dorothy. "The wishing sand's all gone. I must have used the last grain when I wished we were back. Oh dear, we'll have to walk!"

"Where?" Holding his crown with both hands, the dummy sat up and looked anxiously at the little girl.

"To the Emerald City, where I live, in a splendid palace with Ozma, the Queen," explained Dorothy patiently.

"Well, I wouldn't mind living in a palace at all. I'm dressed for the part. Let's go on," said the dummy cheerfully. After a few bends backwards and a few bends forwards, he rose and started unsteadily down the road. "You can be the star in this picture," he added generously, "and I'll be your double and fall for you any time you say."

"All right!" agreed Dorothy, taking him cozily by the arm. Having had great experience with stuffed persons, and having brought Humpy to life, she felt more or less responsible for him.

As they walked along together, she told him a little about herself and as much about the wonderful Land of Oz as she thought a man with hair brains could understand. So many marvelous things had happened to Humpy in the movies that he evinced no surprise at Dorothy's stories.

As the dummy and Dorothy hurried on, a great screaming and scolding made them stop short. A scraggy-looking woods cut off the road ahead and, advancing backward upon them, there came two

crooked and curious woodsmen bearing a flag. As the flag fluttered and rippled in the wind, Dorothy tried to make out the strange words embroidered in white upon its purple background.

"Eht Kcab Sdoow!" said the flag mysteriously. "Og yawa! Og yawa!" shouted the woodsmen rudely. "Teg tuo! Teg tuo! Teg tuo!"

"Is this Oz talk," gasped Humpy, falling back in dismay, "or Arabic? I was in an Arabian picture once and it sounded something like this. Tuo teg, yourselves," he shouted defiantly, as the woodsmen drew nearer, "and none of your back talk either!"

"Back talk!" cried Dorothy, clutching him suddenly by the sleeve. "Oh, that's just what they are talking, Humpy. They're talking 'back talk.' Wait a minute!" Closing her eyes, Dorothy began writing imaginary letters in the air and, as the two woodsmen reached them, she burst out triumphantly, "It says 'The Back Woods' on that flag. Oh dear, I wished we were back and now we are!"

"You think awful fast," blinked the dummy admiringly. "The mere look of that language makes me dizzy. So they're talking back talk are they? Well, what do they say? Are they going to hit us?"

"They're telling us to go away, muttered Dorothy, putting her fingers in her ears, for the two leaders had been joined by a hundred more and all were screaming at the top or rather, I should say, the bottom of their voices. They kept their backs to the travellers and shouted the dreadful back talk over their shoulders. They all carried gleaming axes and, when Dorothy made an attempt to advance, they brandished them threateningly.

"If I could only talk back," wailed the little girl, "I'd tell them I am a Princess. Then maybe they'd let me through."

"Couldn't you write it?" suggested Humpy, looking at the angry horde with growing alarm.

"Why, how did you think of that?" Dorothy stared at him in honest amazement. Then, feeling in her pocket, she brought out a stub of pencil and a crumpled piece of paper. The woodsmen watched her curiously over their shoulders as she slowly wrote her message.

"I ma Ssecnirp Yhtorod, dneirf fo Amzo fo Zo. Yam ew ssap hguorht ruoy sdoow?" printed Dorothy after a great many pauses and erasures. Rather timidly she handed it to one of the flag bearers and after a great scowling and head-shaking, the woodsmen raised their axes and shouted in chorus, "Sey! Sey!"

"That means 'yes'," breathed Dorothy, taking Humpy's arm. "C'mon, let's hurry, before they change their minds." The woodsmen parted solemnly to make a path, but when they reached the backwoods itself, Dorothy took one step and was immediately flung upon her nose.

"Ah, I see you do your own falling," mumbled the dummy. "Why didn't you wait for me?" Humpy was several paces behind Dorothy and as he spoke, he also attempted to enter the woods. But the same hidden force pushed him over backwards. Immediately the inhabitants of Back began to roar

with delight, and if you have never heard anyone roaring backwards, you have no idea how horrid it sounds. It was something between a cough and a choke. Even the dummy knew that he was being insulted, and waved his arms about indignantly.

"There's some trick to it," panted Dorothy, sitting up quickly. "Watch!"

Several of the woodsmen began to move slowly toward her and, observing them closely, the little girl saw that they were, turned backward but really walking forward. "We have to go backward forward!" cried Dorothy. "Hurry up, before they catch us."

"This is worse than dying," groaned Humpy. "How do you go backwards and forwards at the same time?"

"Watch me," said Dorothy, springing up determinedly. Turning her back to the woods, she started to run away from it, and Humpy, goaded into action by the threatening appearance of the terrible woodsmen, did the same. For every step they ran backward forward, they went forward backward two steps, bumping into trees, which had their roots waving muddily in the air and their leaves underground and crashing into bushes of the same curious character. Without stopping to examine the back scenery at all, they ran for their lives, reaching the edge of the woods just as the woodsmen caught up with them. The wicked fellows had really no intention of letting them go, and howled most awfully as Humpy and Dorothy made their escape. Several of the leaders started in pursuit, but each time they set foot out of their forest they were flung down by the invisible back wind and finally gave it up. Seeing that they were safe at last, Dorothy sank down under a tomato tree and fanned herself vigorously with her hat.

"Do we do this often?" puffed the dummy, giving himself a shake. "I see this is going to be a funny picture."

"It's not a picture at all," answered the little girl a bit crossly. "It's real. I told you we have lots of adventures in Oz. Well, this is a real adventure."

"Really!" smiled the dummy, straightening his crown. "Well, if we're not in a picture we ought to be. I'll bet we looked ridiculous running forward backward. I say, if it isn't a funny reel it's real funny and I hope you'll admit that, Miss Dorothy."

"Are you sure there's nothing in your head but hair?" asked the little girl suspiciously. Humpy took off his crown and smoothed his silver wig solemnly. "I don't think so," he said. "Why do you ask?"

"Well," Dorothy gave a little chuckle in spite of herself, "you just made a joke and you thought about writing back. You sound kinda smart to me.

"You're wrong, sighed Humpy, gravely replacing his crown. "I'm only a hair-brained dummy, but I like being alive and I like having you for my star and after this-" Humpy shook his fist angrily at the still muttering woods-men-"after this I'll take all the knocks and hard falls for you. Then maybe, if you tried hard, you might grow to like me a little?"

"Why, I like you already, you dear, generous old thing. " Jumping up, Dorothy gave Humpy an impulsive hug. Then, picking a large tomato, she ate it hungrily. It seemed a long time since she had breakfasted with the Forgetful Poet in Perhaps City.

"We'd better start on now," said the little girl, finishing off the tomato with a long sigh of satisfaction. "We're in the Gillikin Country and if we walk fast we may reach the Emerald City before

night comes.

"All right, Miss Star." Picking up a crooked branch to balance himself, Humpy stepped out cheerfully and, talking of one thing and another, they journeyed for more than an hour through the pleasant fields and lanes, causing no small wonder to the Gilliken farmers whom they passed on the way, for Dorothy in her torn stockings and frock and the dummy in his regal robes and crown made a strange pair, even for Oz.

Without explaining themselves at all, the two hurried on, never stopping until they came to a broad purple river. Humpy looked inquiringly at Dorothy and Dorothy with a puzzled little sigh sat down upon the river bank.

"I'm sure we ought to cross this river," said Dorothy thoughtfully, "but how?"

Humpy put one finger in the water. "Do you want me to fall in for you?" asked the dummy obligingly.

"Well, I don't see what good that would do," frowned Dorothy. "Let me see!" Dorothy looked reflectively at her toes, so of course she saw nothing but her boots, but Humpy looked off across the river, and so it was Humpy who saw them first.

"Oh, look!" stuttered the dummy, grasping Dorothy by the sleeve. "Here comes another adventure, Miss Star!"

Jumping up in alarm, Dorothy saw a curious company scooting about upon the surface of the water. At the very same moment they saw Dorothy, and came skating and sliding across the river like a swarm of giant water bugs.

"Now don't tell me this is real," grunted the dummy, sitting down with a thud. "I wouldn't believe them, even in a picture."

"But they're not in a picture," wailed Dorothy. "They're here, whether you believe them or not. Why they have sails! Oh Humpy, get up quick. Aren't you going to help me?" With a mighty effort Humpy pulled himself together and arose.

"Teg tuo! Teg tuo!" shrilled the dummy, lapsing in his fright and excitement into the terrible language of Back. "Og yawa! Og yawa! Kcab Sdoow!" And snatching off his crown, he hurled it violently at the heads of the approaching rivermen.

CHAPTER 12

The Playful Scooters

THE first of the rivermen caught the dummy's crown neatly and tossed it back. "Is it a game?" he called hoarsely. Dorothy had no time to dodge, so she quickly caught the crown, which came with

such force that she sat down with a jolt.

The dummy danced up and down and waved his arms threateningly.

"Come on, Flub Blub. It's a game," called the first riverman to the man just behind him. "Two Scoots playing a game! Here," he croaked in his deep, frog-like voice, "throw it to me!" He raised his sails coaxingly at Dorothy and, partly because she was afraid to have him come nearer and partly because she didn't know what else to do, the little girl pitched back the crown with all her might. The one called Flub Blub caught it immediately. The next throw was to Humpy and backward and forward between the puzzled travellers on the bank and curious creatures on the water flew the dummy's crown, and breathlessly between catches Dorothy examined these strange playfellows.

They were tall and angular and so sunburned that they almost appeared to be Indians. They were clad in shiny water proof hats and slickers. On their long, thin feet, shaped somewhat like skis and somewhat like narrow boats, they slid over the water as surely and carelessly as we skate about on ice. Extending from the ankle to the finger tips, and as much a part of the wearer as wings are part of a bird, were bright yellow sails. When their arms were down at their sides, the sails were folded in and almost unnoticeable, but with arms outstretched the rivermen had two wide-spread sails to help them scoot over the water. By lowering the right arm or the left, they could turn, tack and get about faster than any sailing boat you have ever seen. Their faces, under the broad souwesters, were child-like and pleasant and, finding them more interesting than dangerous, Dorothy motioned for Humpy to hold the crown, which had landed for about the tenth time with a resounding thwack against his chest.

"But I was just getting good," objected the dummy, placing the crown regretfully on his head. "What now?" Humpy had become so engrossed in catching the crown that he had quite forgotten his fright and, as the leader came in close to the shore, he looked at him with frank curiosity.

"Well, Scoots," bubbled the one called Flub Blub, rocking gently backward and forward on the water, "who won?"

"I think it was a tie," answered Dorothy politely, "but why do you call us Scoots?"

"Because your sails haven't grown, gurgled the riverman, taking a white bubble pipe from his mouth and smiling broadly at the little girl. "But don't mind, my dear. We must all be Scoots before we're Scooters. Just stick in the mud a little longer and your sails will grow as large as mine."

"Dorothy's not a Scoot, she's a star," protested Humpy, "and I'm her double and do all the hard falling. Don't you know' a star when you see one?"

The Scooter turned his pale blue eyes curiously on Humpy. "You look about as much like her as a pumpkin looks like a peach," he observed mildly. "Why do you call yourself her double? And if she's a star what's she doing out now? It's only ten o'clock." At this all the other Scooters removed their pipes and nodded gravely.

"Is she an out-and-out star, or a down-and-out star?" inquired Flub Biub, blowing a whole flock of soap bubbles from his pipe and watching them float lazily up the river.

"I'm a Princess," put in Dorothy, seeing that everything was becoming hopelessly confused, "and we're on our way to the Emerald City."

"A Princess!" exclaimed the Scooter in amazement. He took off his souwester and scratched

his head in a puzzled way. Dorothy was so astonished to find that his hair was moss that she said nothing at all for a whole minute.

"If you're a Princess, why are you so shabby?" choked a Scooter named Mouldy.

"Don't mind him, he has a bad cold," apologized Flub, putting his hat on again. "He would go a picking daisies on the shore yesterday and got his feet dry. Now look at him!"

The Scooter coughed miserably. "That's right," he wheezed, dabbing at his eyes with his right sail. "Never get your feet dry little Scoot, it's turrrible!"

At this Dorothy giggled in spite of herself. Then seeing the poor fellow was offended she asked quickly, "Is there any way we could cross this river, Mr. Mouldy?"

"There's a bridge a bit further on," sniffed the Scooter, waving his sail sulkily. Following the direction, Dorothy saw what at first looked like a silver bridge. But on closer inspection it proved to be a great torrent of water spouting across the river like the stream from a giant hose.

"But it's water!" gasped the little girl in dismay.

"Of course it's water. What should a bridge be but water?" demanded the leader of the Scooters impatiently. "Just stand on one side and it will shoot you across.

"How dreadfully wet," sighed the dummy dolefully, "but I'll cross if you will Dorothy."

"That's right," said Flub Blub approvingly, "and here's the way to do it." Followed by the others, the Scooter sailed up the river and leaped lightly on the gleaming arch of water. Dorothy, watching them shoot across with sails outspread, thought she had never seen a more interesting sight. Just before they reached the opposite bank, they jumped into the water and in less than a minute they all were back.

"See," smiled the leader cheerfully, "it's as easy as sailing, Miss Star or Princess or whatever else you call yourself."

"Just a little girl, thank you," smiled Dorothy, looking very doubtfully at the water bridge.

"Is he a little girl too?" asked the riverman, eyeing Humpy attentively. At this the poor dummy looked so indignant that Dorothy quickly told about her fall into America, her meeting with Humpy and the strange manner in which he had been wished to life. But as the Scooters had never heard of America, nor of a moving picture dummy, her story was not at all clear to them. And when she went on to explain that crossing the river on the water bridge and getting her feet wet would give her a cold, they were more astonished than ever.

"Couldn't you carry her across?" asked Humpy, as they stood arguing excitedly together. "I don't mind the water myself and am quite used to floating and falling, but Dorothy

"Ever try a water fall?" interrupted Mouldy inquisitively.

"Let's take her across, boys!" called Flub Blub before Humpy had a chance to answer. "Come along Princess Little Girl and Mr. Dummy!" With hoarse shouts the Scooters stretched their long arms. A dozen seized upon Humpy and, holding him awkwardly between them, started scooting across the river.

Dorothy, standing precariously on Flub Blub's right foot and balanced by Mouldy's left arm, fairly raced over the waters between the two rivermen. Their sails flapped merrily in the wind and the spray from their long ski-like feet spread out like white wings behind.

"Won't Ozma and Betsy be surprised when I tell them about this!" thought Dorothy as they neared the opposite bank. Little did Dorothy guess of the strange happenings Ozma and the others would soon have to relate to her!

"Better stay with us and learn to scoot," advised Flub Blub, seeing the smile on Dorothy's face.

"Ah what is more brave

than a life on the wave!

No care and no trouble,

life goes like a bubble!"

The Scooter waved his arm jovially, as he recited the couplet.

"But what do you eat?" inquired Dorothy. She had been puzzling over this for some time.

"Water cress, water melons and fish," answered Flub Blub, without slackening his speed.

"Raw fish?" asked Dorothy, with a little gasp.

"Well, rawther," giggled another Scooter just behind them. "Raw fish make the sails grow. Stay in the water little girl and you'll soon have a fine pair of sails."

"That's right," added Flub Blub approvingly. Removing his bubble pipe he continued earnestly, "Fish will make your feet grow too. Eat fish, my dear, and grow a beautiful pair like mine!"

Dorothy looked down at the Scooter's long feet and shuddered. "That settles it," she whispered, with a little shiver. "I'll never eat fish!"

They had now reached the opposite side of the river. Thanking the Scooters for their kindness and bidding them an affectionate farewell, the little girl scampered quickly up the bank. Humpy and already been tossed ashore.

"Good-bye!" shouted the Scooters, cheerfully waving their sails. They were in mid-stream by this time.

"Good-bye!" called Dorothy and Humpy, picking himself up clumsily, waved his crown.

"Ah, still the same size I see," smiled Humpy, looking amiably at Dorothy. "Any more adventures coming?"

"Well, I liked that one," chuckled Dorothy, pulling up her stockings and straightening her hat. "Didn't you?"

Humpy nodded, his eyes wandering over the fields and hills, spreading out invitingly before them. "Is this the way to your palace?" he demanded, throwing his cloak back over one shoulder and waving his stick ahead.

"It's not my palace," explained Dorothy, taking his arm, "it's Ozma's. She is the Queen of Oz, you know, but I have the dearest little apartment there, with a hundred fairy tale books, a hundred games, a hundred dresses, a dog named Toto and a little white kitten."

"Well, I hope your dog won't chew me," said Humpy uneasily. "I was in a picture with a dog once. He was supposed to knock me down. Well, he did and, before they could pull him away he had chewed off my ear and eaten up my wig. I hate dogs."

"But Toto's only a little dog, you'll just love Toto," Dorothy assured him quickly.

Humpy still looked doubtful and, seeing that dogs made him unhappy, Dorothy began telling him all about the Scarecrow and Scraps. Chatting pleasantly, they walked along for more than an hour, when Humpy, ever on the lookout for adventures, gave Dorothy's arm a quick jerk. Moving slowly behind a thin fringe of trees to the right was a great gray shadow. As they stopped, the shadow stopped too and out through the trees something that looked like a long grey snake came curiously curling.

"Run!" puffed the valiant dummy. "Run, Dorothy! This is my part of the show for it can't bite me!"

Raising his stick, Humpy brought it down sharply on the thick gray body. There was an enraged snort and snuffle in the bushes. Then, before Dorothy could run or Humpy could use his stick again, a perfectly enormous elephant came charging out between the trees. His sides were heaving with rage and his tusks were trembling with temper.

"Who hit me?" screamed the elephant, lashing about furiously with his trunk. "I'll mash him, I'll crash him! Ah hah!" His little eyes snapped wickedly as they fell upon Humpy's stick. The next instant the great beast had seized the dummy in his trunk and flung him fifty feet into the air. Then, pausing to straighten his pearl head-piece, he glared indignantly at Dorothy. There is only one elephant in Oz who is elegant enough to own a headband of pearls and, with a little shriek of surprise and recognition, Dorothy ran forward just in time to save Humpy from another toss in the air.

"Why Kabumpo!" cried the little girl in delight. "Wait! Wait a minute!" The Elegant Elephant, after a quick look at the little girl, snatched a huge silk hanky from a pocket in his robe and blew his trunk violently.

"Well, I'll be blown if it isn't Dorothy," wheezed Kabumpo, half-choked between embarrassment and surprise. "What brings you here?"

Just as he spoke he caught another glimpse of Humpy, who had risen and was advancing unsteadily. "Excuse me until I mash that idiot," he roared.

"Oh please don't mash him," begged Dorothy in alarm. "You see he's only a dummy and he didn't mean to hit you. Besides he's a friend of mine."

Kabumpo swayed uncertainly for a moment and then stuffed his handkerchief back into his pocket. "Well, nobody but a dummy would hit an elephant on the trunk. Why have such dumb friends?"

he asked sulkily.

As quickly as she could, Dorothy explained her strange meeting with the dummy, his coming to life and her curious adventures since. It was such an amazing story that Kabumpo now regarded Humpy with more interest than anger. Dorothy, seeing that the dummy still thought her in danger, hastily took away his stick and introduced him to the Elegant Elephant.

Kabumpo, you know, belongs to the royal family of Pumperdink, a cozy old-fashioned country in the Gilliken country, and he is one of the chief ornaments of its court and a prime favorite of Pompadore, the young Prince. He has a suite of rooms in the palace, and more jewels and embroidered robes than any other elephant in all of Oz.

Once upon a time Kabumpo had helped Pompa save Peg Amy, an enchanted Princess, from a dreadful old wizard named Glegg. This little Princess had afterwards married the Prince of Pumperdink and it was on this adventure that Dorothy had first met the Elegant Elephant.

"But why did he throw me away?" asked Humpy suspiciously, when Dorothy had told him all that I have just told you.

"I'll throw you away every time you hit me, so you'd better get that through your head at once," trumpeted Kabumpo indignantly.

"Well, just so you don't throw Dorothy, it will be all right," sighed the dummy resignedly. "I'm quite used to being flung about, but I've never been in a picture with an elephant before."

"This isn't a picture. It's Oz," snapped Kabumpo loftily. "Don't you know anything at all?"

"Ah, don't quarrel," begged Dorothy anxiously. "Tell me about Pompa and Peg Amy, Kabumpo, and how's everything in Pumperdink?"

"Well," mused the Elegant Elephant, taking out his handkerchief again and mopping his forehead thoughtfully, "things are kinda slow. Since Pompa married Peg there's been no excitement at all. Fact is," admitted Kabumpo confidentially, "I was just on my way to the Emerald City to see whether I could stir up a little fun."

"Why so are we!" cried Dorothy in delight. "Let's all go together. Oh Kabumpo, won't that be fun?"

The Elegant Elephant looked dubiously at the dummy. "Well, so long as you're going in the same direction you might as well ride on my back," he remarked carelessly. Then, winding his trunk about Dorothy Kabumpo, under his pompous manner, was really a kind-hearted old fellow] he set the little girl aloft and, snatching up the dummy, he tossed him recklessly over his shoulder.

With a blast from his trunk like a steamboat whistle, Kabumpo got under way, plunging ahead so swiftly that Dorothy and Humpy had all they could do to keep their seats.

"Isn't this fun?" called Dorothy, holding fast to the Elegant Elephant's great ear.

"Is it?" inquired the dummy, clinging desperately to Kabumpo's jewelled harness and fluttering up and down like a banner at each step. "So this is fun? Ah, how fast I am learning."

CHAPTER 13

Snip Meets the Blanks

ON THE night before Ozma received the mysterious warning, Snip and Mombi - as we well know - were making their way through the deep forest on the other side of Catty Corners. Each step was growing harder and harder for the weary little button boy. Holding the great goose in his arms, he staggered along, guided by the flicker of Mombi's lantern, stumbling over roots, brushing against trees and shivering with the clammy chill of midnight. The old witch seemed positively tireless and Snip had about decided he could go no further, when she stopped suddenly beside a rough stone well.

"Snip," wheezed Mombi craftily, "I'm thirsty. Now you're younger than I am. Just get me a drink, will you?" Her voice was so pleasant that Snip unsuspectingly set Pajuka on the ground and peered down into the dark depths of the well, while Mombi held the lantern. There was a chain at the side and, grasping it in both hands, Snip leaned over and began to haul up the bucket.

This was the chance Mombi had been waiting for all evening and, seizing Snip by the heels, she heartlessly tumbled him into the well. Her wicked shout of triumph and Snip's shrill outcry awakened Pajuka. Fluttering into the air, he made a great snatch at the disappearing little button boy.

Snip, on his part, clutching desperately at the rough stones to save himself, caught instead a handful of goose feathers and went plunging down into the dreadful darkness. Down, down, down he fell, like a lump of lead, to the very bottom. With eyes shut tight and clenched fists, Snip waited for the terrible bump that should end his fall. But instead of a bump, there was a soft thud and bounce and he found himself wedged fast in a padded bucket. The jar set the bucket in motion and for a moment Snip thought it was going to shoot up to the top again. Instead it began to move sideways, for opening out from the bottom of the well was a long, damp passageway, and the bucket swinging on a heavy cable shot rapidly along through this underground tunnel.

It was too dark for Snip to see but, stretching his arms carefully, he felt the walls above and at the side. Clearly the old witch had meant to destroy him, so she could work out her wicked plans undisturbed. "But maybe," whispered poor Snip, crouching low to keep from bumping his head, "maybe I can get out after all and manage to reach the Emerald City first and warn Ozma of Mombi's treachery. Then surely Ozma will help me find Pajuka and she, herself, can hunt for the lost King."

It was a long and terrible ride, and many times Snip's heart thumped so loudly that it drowned out the creak of the straining cable. Where under the earth was he going? Would the flying bucket never stop? Just as he was losing his courage entirely, Snip saw a star. The bucket had come to the end of the tunnel and was shooting up another well as swiftly as Snip had fallen down the first one. Almost as soon as he made this joyful discovery, the bucket reached the top, spilled him carelessly over the edge and dropped back with a hollow ring to the bottom.

For several minutes Snip lay where he had fallen, too shaken and breathless to care where he was. Then, rolling over, he looked anxiously around. In the faint starlight, not much was visible. He seemed to be in a small orchard and just beyond the trees he could see the dim outlines of a strange city.

Satisfying himself that no immediate danger threatened and too weary to go another step, the worn-out little adventurer flung himself down beside the well and was soon fast asleep.

It was morning and nearly nine o'clock when he was awakened by the sound of hurrying foot-steps and shrill cries.

"He has freckles," screamed the first voice.

"His nose turns up," shouted the second.

"Who threw him in our well?" demanded a third fretfully. "Is he welcome or is he not?"

"Not!" boomed the voices altogether.

"Take his hat, get his buttons!" growled a deep bass voice. At this the steps pattered so close that Snip rolled over and sat up, confronting as he did so the very oddest company he had ever seen. For one unbelievable second he stared, thinking he must still be asleep and dreaming. The company on their part regarded him with blank looks. And no wonder. They had not a face among them!

"If it were people without clothes I should say they were savages," gasped Snip, "but clothes, without people! Whew!" Leaping to his feet, he turned toward the town and ran as if for his life.

Screaming furiously, the Blanks started in pursuit. Now to look over your shoulder and see a collection of suits, hats, shoes and gloves, all in their proper places upon perfectly invisible wearers, chasing after you is a fearsome business, and as they came nearer and nearer Snip fairly stepped upon his own toes in his hurry to escape.

"How dare you show your face around here?" raged the leader, brandishing with an invisible hand a dreadfully visible and dangerous looking umbrella. "Don't you know it's against the law to show your face in Blankenburg?"

"I-can't-help-it!" panted Snip and then as the terrible crowd began to gain on him, he reached in his pockets, seized a handful of buttons and flung them wildly over his shoulder. When he dared to look back again, the Blanks were quarreling bitterly over the buttons.

Taking advantage of their greediness, Snip lunged into the town, entered the first house he came to and slammed the door. At first he thought the great dim room was empty but he finally made out an old man with silver hair and beard sitting cross-legged on a long table at the back window. He was stitching solemnly upon a red velvet cloak and looked so kind and gentle that Snip promptly burst into an account of his troubles. But to his dismay, the tailor went calmly on with his work, never glancing up at all. Snip could hear the Blanks clattering over the paving stones so, rushing forward, he shook the old man desperately by the sleeve.

With a start that sent his spectacles flying across the shop, the tailor leaped to his feet. "A boy!" he stuttered, seizing Snip by the shoulders. "Why, how did you get here? No, don't tell me now for I couldn't hear you if you did. You see my ears have flown off and we'll have to wait till they return. A boy! Bless my heart, yours is the first face I've seen in years and years."

In growing amazement and alarm, Snip waved toward the window. With a quick nod, the tailor swept him into a big cupboard. "They shan't have you," declared the old man determinedly and, when a moment later the Blanks rushed into the shop, he shook his head crossly at all of their threats and

inquiries.

"Can't you see my ears are off?" he mumbled fretfully. "Whom do you want? What are you screeching about?"

The Blanks cried loudly that they were searching for a boy, but the tailor pretended not to understand and, after poking about the shop a bit, they finally took themselves off. Snip, who had one eye glued to the cupboard door, saw them streaming into the street, their plumed hats trembling with indignation, their buckled shoes twinkling with the speed of their invisible feet.

As the last Blank turned the corner, there was a whirr in the air and in through the window flashed two butterflies. But were they butterflies? Next instant they had fluttered over and attached themselves to the old tailor's head.

"Not butterflies, but butterfly ears!" gasped Snip, falling headlong from the cupboard with the shock of the thing.

"It's all right," smiled the tailor, adjusting the ears quickly and looking kindly over at Snip. "And dear, dear, what a strange story my left ear is telling me!"

"Do your ears tell you stories?" asked Snip, forgetting his own troubles for a moment.

"Yes. The left one tells me that an elephant has run off with a little girl," mused the tailor, wiping his specs. "Fancy that, now!"

Snip could hear a faint buzzing and eyed the old gentleman's ears with growing interest and respect.

"There, there, that will do," muttered the Tailor at last, giving his left ear a little pinch. "I wish to hear this young gentleman's story, so please be quiet and attend."

Immediately both ears tilted toward Snip and, fearful lest they fly off before he could finish, the little button boy poured out the whole history of his adventures from the time he left Kimbaloo to his fall down the strange well.

"Ozma!" sighed the tailor, brushing his hand absently across his brow. "Is Ozma Queen of Oz now? I've been prisoner here so long I've forgotten everything. You say that this witch, Mombi, transformed and hid her father and now proposes to find and restore him to the throne? And the goose? Whom did you say he was?"

"Pajuka is the Prime Minister," puffed Snip hastily. "He's been trying for years and years to find the King himself. If someone doesn't help him soon, and get him away from Mombi, he'll be roasted or eaten or lost!"

Snip opened his hand, where still clutched in his moist grasp were the feathers he had pulled from Pajuka's wing as he fell down the well. The tailor leaned forward to examine them. As he did so, a gold feather separated itself from the white, fluttered for a moment in the air and then sailed straight through the window. It was the golden feather that, we know, took the magic message to the Emerald City, but as neither Snip nor the old tailor could follow its flight, they stood gaping after it in perfect astonishment.

"Why I didn't know Pajuka had any gold feathers. How did it fly off by itself? Oh dear, I wish someone would help me find him," wailed the little button boy dismally. "Couldn't you, Mister-Mister-?"

"Just plain Tora," put in the tailor, rubbing his forehead absently. "Well, it's a mighty queer business, Snip. I'd like to help you, but I've all this work to do." The old man waved wearily toward the racks and stacks of unfinished cloaks and waistcoats.

"Do you mean to say you make clothes for them?" Snip jerked his thumb indignantly over his shoulder.

The tailor nodded. "Have to," he added miserably. "Been at it for years and years."

"Do they pay you?" asked the little button boy in surprise.

"Well, they let me live in this house, and they give me plenty to eat. Besides, I can't get away," finished the old man, sinking down on a three-legged stool and letting his head drop heavily in his hands.

"But you're not invisible like they are. How did you happen to come here anyway?"

The tailor pushed his specs up on his forehead. "Seems as if I'd always been here," he mourned dolefully, "stitching, stitching, stitching and never getting done. If I try to pass through that gate," he pointed through the window into a small yard, "if I try to pass through that gate some invisible force holds me back. So what can I do? But I have my ears, he continued more cheerfully. "They can go off whenever they please and they tell me what's going on and keep me pretty happy."

"Well, I wouldn't stand it," exclaimed Snip, thrusting his hands deep into his pockets and staring down sympathetically at the old man. In spite of his strange ears, there was something so gentle and lovable about the old tailor that Snip could not bear to have him unhappy. "I'd get away somehow," declared the little boy earnestly.

Tora shook his head hopelessly. "The thing to do, is to get you away before they come back," he sighed, taking an old silver watch from his vest pocket. "The Blanks are great eaters and wouldn't miss their breakfasts for a fortune. So now's the best time for you to go. Come on, I'll show you the way to the Farewell. You can see it from the gate."

"Is that the only way out?" groaned Snip. He felt that one experience with a well would be quite enough for him.

"Only way I know," answered Tora, taking down his coat from a peg. "You reach Blanken-burg by the Well-come and leave by the Fare-well."

Sticking his needle in his lapel, he started rapidly for the door and, feeling very mixed up indeed, Snip hurried after him. There was not a Blank in sight as they stepped into Tora's yard and Snip, looking at the handsome dwellings on both sides of the street, thought he would like to see more of this strange city. A bright pink blanket flew from a castle which stood at the end of the square and Tora explained that this was the national emblem of the Blanks.

There were a hundred questions on the tip of Snip's tongue. For instance, he wanted to know how the Blanks had come to be invisible and how Tora himself had come to have such wonderful ears, but the old gentleman was so anxious for him to get safely off that he had not time for a single question.

"If they capture you before you reach the well, be sure not to let them wash your face," warned Tora earnestly, "for if they wash your face, it will disappear. Remember don't wash your face, whatever happens."

This was an easy promise for a little boy to make and, following the direction of Tora's long finger, Snip saw a stone well in the small park at the corner of the street.

"Good-bye!" sighed the old man, giving him a wistful pat on the shoulder. "If you ever find this King or reach the Emerald City, tell someone about old Tora, will you?"

"I'll tell Ozma; I'll tell everybody!" promised the little button boy settling his cap determinedly. Then, because he hated to leave Tora looking so sad, he seized him suddenly by the hand. "Why don't you try to get through the gate now?" urged Snip. "Come on, I'll help you!" As he spoke, he kicked open the gate with his heel, stepped out and began to tug at the tailor's coat.

"No use," began the old man. "No use for me to try to get away

Before he could finish the sentence Snip had dragged him entirely through. For an instant he stood staring back uncertainly at his little shop with its shabby sign, "The Tired Tailor of Oz." He had printed it to amuse himself one stormy evening. Snatching a piece of chalk from his pocket, while Snip danced up and down with anxiety and impatience, Tora dashed back and scribbled two letters before the second word.

"The Re-Tired Tailor of Oz," said the sign now, and with a long, gusty chuckle, the old man grasped Snip by the hand and ran with all his might toward the Fare-well.

The Blanks were evidently still at breakfast, and Tora and Snip made their way through the deserted streets of Blankenburg without meeting a soul. In a jiffy they came to the Fare-well, both out of breath but happy to be near to freedom.

CHAPTER 14

The Old Tailor's Story

SNIP was just gathering his courage for a jump down the well when Tora lifted him up and dropped him gently over the edge. Again that terrifying swoop into the darkness. "After this," gulped Snip dizzily, as he turned over and over, "I shall think nothing of falling out of a button tree, or down a flight of steps. Perhaps I'll try a fall every day just to keep in practice." With a breathless bump, Snip landed in the padded bucket, putting an end to these curious thoughts. Before he had time for any others, he had shot through another underground passage and up and out of the well with such force that he rolled like a ball on the soft green moss. When he stopped rolling he saw Tora sitting beside him, smoothing down his long silver locks and untangling his whiskers.

"Are your ears on tight?" asked Snip anxiously, for it would certainly be a dreadful thing if the tailor's ears had been left behind. Tora put up his hand quickly to touch them and then, with a pleased

nod, arose to his feet.

"You've brought me good luck, Snip," smiled the old gentleman. "I've tried a hundred times to escape from the Blanks, but never could get through that gate."

"Well, I am glad I could help you, for you helped me," said Snip. "Now that you have escaped, where will you go? Do you remember where you lived before?"

"I remember nothing," acknowledged the tailor sorrowfully, "so I'm going with you and after we find this good goose you speak of and the King, I'll just look around for another shop. A tailor has no cause to worry, and I've all my tools right with me." He chuckled, jingling his pockets cheerfully.

Snip had to smile himself, for Tora certainly did look like a walking workshop. Around his neck were three long tape measures. Through tapes in his vest there hung a dozen pairs of scissors and shears of all sizes. Fastened to his coat was a huge pin cushion and both lapels were stuck full of needles. As for his pockets, they simply bulged with spools of silk, beeswax and thread.

Snip thought he had never seen a more interesting traveller and, feeling happier than he had since he left Kimbaloo, and quite hopeful of finding Pajuka, he began to examine the surrounding country. The Fare-well had spilled them into a large field of wheat and, from several purple barns in the distance, Snip knew they were still in the land of the Gillikens.

"You'll have to be guide, Snip," sighed the tailor, gazing around with a bewildered expression. "I've lived so long with the Blanks that I know nothing of these parts at all. As for the Emerald City, I can't remember even hearing of it."

"Well, I've never been there," admitted Snip, "but I know it is in the very center of Oz and we were going south when Mombi threw me down the well. So if we can find out which direction is south we ought to reach the Emerald City by night time. Which way do you think it is?"

The tailor squinted doubtfully up at the sun and, after a few more useless guesses, they determined to take a chance and started diagonally across the field.

"I wonder what shape Mombi did turn the King into," muttered Snip, as they hurried along through the wheat. "And I wonder whether Ozma can change Pajuka back to his own self again. He's so tired of being a goose!"

"It must be pretty tiresome," observed Tora, pushing his specs up on his forehead, "though no worse than tailoring from morning till night for a city full of invisible and ungrateful rascals. Not that I mind the tailoring," he explained hastily, looking down sideways at Snip. "I love that, and say, I'd like to make you a little suit sometime when I've set up my shop. No, it wasn't the tailoring, but the imprisonment that I minded."

"Do you 'spose they've missed you yet? What will they do when they find you're gone?" chuckled the little button boy. He looked up expectantly, but the old man was staring thoughtfully over an olive tree and did not seem to hear Snip's question.

"Oh bother!" exclaimed Snip. "His ears have gone off again. How awfully inconvenient!"

"I always let them off after breakfast," explained the tailor apologetically and just as if he had read Snip's thoughts. "It rests them, you know."

"But we've had no breakfast," began Snip impatiently. Then, realizing that Tora could not hear one word, he walked along in a resigned silence, thinking how annoying it must be to have butterfly ears. "And yet," mused Snip slowly, "it might be rather fun, too. One could send one's ears to places one didn't care to go to school and to lectures and all that sort of thing, and take them off when folks scolded or the conversation grew dull." He had thought up quite a number of uses for butterfly ears, when the tailor, himself, broke the silence.

"Perhaps it would amuse you to hear a little about the Blanks," began Tora in his pleasant voice. "They were not always invisible as now, but they were always vain and haughty and trying to outshine one another in appearance. In fact," sighed the old man, with a grave nod, "they thought of nothing but dress and all their time and money was spent for new and splendid apparel. As some of the inhabitants were handsomer than others there was always an argument as to who really looked the best.

"Shortly after I, myself, came to Blankenburg, Vanette, the Queen, walking in a small woods behind the palace, discovered a hidden pool. Looking into the water to admire her reflection, she accidentally dropped her handkerchief. Before she could snatch it out the handkerchief had disappeared and, when she reached into the pond to search for it, her hand and arm suddenly became invisible."

Tora looked down to see how Snip was taking the story and, finding him interested, continued dreamily: "For a time the Queen was exceedingly frightened, but all at once a wicked plan popped into her head. Hurrying back to the palace, she ordered her servants to carry a bucket of the magic water to everyone in the city. She then commanded them to bathe in the enchanted water and since then they have been perfectly invisible. Vanetta, herself, who is old and fat and exceedingly jealous of the young girls, bathed in the water too and now as invisible as the rest of her subjects. So now, when they dress up in their fine clothes, faces don't count at all, and the Queen always wins all the beauty prizes. That's why it's against the law to have a face in Blankenburg," continued Tora solemnly. "I'm glad we escaped before they got yours.

Snip was glad, too, but wanted to ask how Tora had managed to save his own face, and the tailor, guessing what was in the little boy's mind, finished up quickly: "For some reason or other the magic water had no effect upon me and as I was old and ugly and quite useful in my own way, they finally stopped bothering me.

Picking up a long, crooked stick and evidently thinking he had talked enough, Tora began to whistle an old Oz tune. Walking along solemnly beside him Snip could not help wondering how the old tailor had ever come to be a prisoner in Blankenburg and whether he had always had butterfly ears.

"I'll ask him as soon as they come back," decided Snip, but meantime he was growing hungrier and hungrier, for since the drink of cream in Catty Corners he had had nothing at all to eat. He kept a sharp lookout for fruit and nut trees and presently, in a small grove to the right, he caught a glimpse of a perfectly enormous breakfast bush.

Motioning for Tora to wait for him, Snip darted off. The tailor looked slightly puzzled but, making no objection, sat down on a rock and went on with his whistling. Hastening back with two steaming breakfast dishes in his hands, Snip was surprised to hear a loud, plaintive voice mingling with Tora's tune. Quickening his steps the little boy saw a tall, kingly figure waving indignant arms at the tailor.

"Are you crazy?" he shouted angrily. "I ask you once again, may I borrow a breakfast or a bite of lunch? It's for a Princess. Can't you answer me?" But Tora, fixing his eye on a fluffy cloud skimming across the sky, went calmly on with his tune. "He is deaf to my pleas," puffed the stranger, whirling round

unsteadily and almost bumping into Snip. "Deaf and dumb!"

"He isn't deaf," explained the little boy breathlessly. "He has just mislaid his ears. I mean he's let them off for awhile."

"Let them off? Dorothy! Dorothy! Come at once! Here is a man with mislaid ears!" shrilled the stranger, hobbling off. Snip stared after him, open mouthed, as he wobbled wildly down the road.

CHAPTER 15

Kabumpo to the Rescue

YOU have guessed that it was our old friend Humpy who had begged a breakfast of Tora, the tailor. You see the Elegant Elephant, travelling like the wind itself, had carried Dorothy and the dummy almost to the exact spot where Snip and Tora had fallen out of the Fare-well. Then, exceedingly fatigued by his unaccustomed exertion, Kabumpo had gone off in search of some lunch.

Snip had scarcely recovered from the shock of Humpy's sudden disappearance when back he came, holding Dorothy tightly by the hand. Now the little button boy had often seen pictures of Dorothy in the history books of Kimbaloo, but she had always been dressed as a Princess, so we cannot blame him for failing to recognize the shabby little girl who stood staring so earnestly at the tired tailor of Oz.

"Why he has no ears at all," cried Dorothy. Then, catching sight of Snip, she stopped short. "We were wondering whether you could lend us some lunch," faltered Dorothy, talking very fast to cover her embarrassment. "Kabumpo can eat tree-tops and Humpy does not eat at all, but I've had nothing but a tomato since breakfast and I'm very hungry."

"There's a breakfast bush over yonder," answered Snip, waving sulkily toward the grove. Tora had saved his face and he was not going to have him laughed at. Dorothy turned to see for herself and, as she did, Tora arose and moved quickly over to the dummy.

"You remind me of someone I used to know," sighed the tailor, fingering Humpy's green velvet robe dreamily. "Who are you? Are you real?"

"Well, not quite. You see," began Dorothy, "he's a moving picture dummy." Suddenly remembering that the tailor could not hear her, she turned back to Snip. "Where are his ears?" asked the little girl nervously.

"Here they come now!" cried Snip, forgetting his vexation and, setting down the two breakfast dishes, he waved his cap excitedly in the air. As Snip waved and pointed, Dorothy saw the tailor's ears whizz giddily over a lilac bush and then settle softly, one on each side of his head.

"Who did you say you were?" asked Tora calmly, continuing his conversation with Humpy and paying no more attention to his ears than we would pay to a couple of flies.

"A dummy!" whispered Humpy, blinking his painted eyes, while his voice grew fainter and fainter with astonishment. "I am a dummy, but what in Oz are you?"

"A tailor," answered Tora with a wink at Snip. "Well, that's a splendid cloak you're wearing, and a crown too. Are you a king, dummy?"

"No, he's a dummy king," explained Dorothy, looking longingly at the hot breakfasts. "If we could just sit down and have something to eat I could tell you all about him. Then, maybe, you would tell me a little about your---Dorothy was going to say ears but, fearing this might not be quite polite, she changed it quickly to selves. The little girl cast a curious sidelong glance at Snip, but the button boy was gazing intently at the dummy.

"Why we're looking for a king," exploded Snip excitedly. "Oh Tora, do you suppose this could be he?"

"Why not do as this little lady suggests?" interrupted Tora, for he could see that Dorothy was weary as well as hungry. "Let's have breakfast together and then talk things over. "Well, don't start until I come back," called the little boy, as Dorothy settled comfortably down beside the tailor. In a moment Snip had returned with another breakfast and, while Humpy looked on curiously, they opened the silver dishes Snip had picked from the breakfast bush. What could be cozier? Bacon, eggs, toast and a small sealed cup of coffee grew neatly in each one, but it never occurred to Dorothy, Snip or the tailor to be surprised at this, for breakfast bushes are quite common in Oz. Humpy, however, had seen nothing like this in the movies and kept up a low muttering to himself, as he watched them eat one and then another dainty from the dishes.

"Now then," smiled the tailor, after he had taken a long sip of coffee, "suppose you begin." He looked expectantly at Dorothy. "I think you must be the little girl my ears were telling me of a while back, but where is the elephant?"

"Mercy!" spluttered Dorothy, nearly choking on her coffee. "Do your ears tell you everything?"

"Oh no, just odds and ends of things," answered Tora, reaching up to touch them affectionately.

"Well, did they tell you about me?" inquired Humpy, straightening his crown importantly.

"No," smiled the old man. "That's just what we're waiting to hear, though I declare I have seen you somewhere before. Have you ever seen me?"

Humpy shook his head very positively and Dorothy, settling back against a tree, proceeded with her story. Introducing herself modestly and beginning with Wish Way, she related every single thing that had happened since her fall into California.

Snip was especially interested in Dorothy's sudden change in size. "Is that what tore your dress?" he asked curiously.

The little girl nodded and Tora, ruffling up his silver locks and looking first at Dorothy and then at Humpy, murmured over and over: "Well, I can hardly believe my ears, I can hardly believe my ears!"

Dorothy could not help thinking that the tailor's ears were hard for anyone to believe, but feeling it would be rude to say so, went hurriedly on with her adventures, telling of her meeting with the

Scooters and with the Elegant Elephant, whom she described at some length.

"And now," concluded the little girl, finishing off the last of the toast, "we're going straight to the Emerald City. Where are you going?"

"Why we're going to the Emerald City too!" burst out Snip, "and maybe Dorothy can help us find Pajuka and warn Ozma!"

"Warn Ozma?" cried Dorothy, jumping up in a hurry. "Why, what is the matter?"

"Better tell her," advised the tailor gravely, while Humpy edged close to the little button boy and looked earnestly up into his face.

"We'll," began Snip, feeling a bit shy in the presence of a person as important as Princess Dorothy of Oz, "Mombi is trying to find the lost King of Oz and turn Ozma to a piano. Pajuka, he's a goose, I mean a Prime Minister, and he's trying to find the find the King too, and if we don't get to the Emerald City first that old witch will steal all the magic and capture everybody."

"Why this is a regular thriller," puffed the dummy, pushing back his crown. "Witches, geese, lost kings and everything. Oh, I'm enjoying this picture immensely. Couldn't I fall for this lost king, Dorothy?"

"I thought you were the King, yourself, at first," explained Snip, "but of course, if Dorothy found you in America, you couldn't possibly be the King of Oz. Besides, I don't believe Mombi would turn the King to a dummy, do you?"

"Oh, anything can happen in the pictures," said Humpy carelessly.

No one had time to tell Humpy he was not in a picture, for Dorothy, shuddering at the mere mention of old Mombi, insisted on Snip telling all over again just how he had discovered the witch's wicked plans. This Snip did, from the strange conversation between Pajuka and Mombi in the castle kitchen of Kimbaloo to his encounter with the Blanks and his escape with the tired tailor of Oz. When he came to the part in the story where Mombi had flung him down the well, Humpy fell over backwards and Dorothy gasped with indignation.

"Oh, we'll have to hurry, we'll have to hurry!" exclaimed the little girl, clasping her hands anxiously, "for if Mombi reaches the Emerald City first something dreadful will happen. I'm glad the King of Oz is alive, but I'm not going to have Ozma turned to a piano. Oh dear! Oh dear! Why doesn't Kabumpo hurry back?"

"Hadn't we better start anyway?" asked Snip, who was growing more and more worried about Pajuka. He felt sure Mombi meant to get rid of the goose as soon as she found the King. "Let's go without the elephant," he proposed eagerly.

"No, we'd better wait," advised Dorothy, "for Kabumpo can travel a hundred times faster than we can, and a hundred times faster than Mombi can.

"While we are waiting," suggested Tora, who had been carefully threading his needle, "I'll mend your frock, my dear. Have you any more buttons, Snip?"

Snip felt in his pockets and brought out a handful of gold and silver buttons and as Dorothy

stood shading her eyes and keeping an anxious lookout for Kabumpo, Tora sewed them neatly in place.

"It must have been mighty queer, growing up all at once," observed the old tailor, biting off his thread and giving the little girl an affectionate pat on the shoulder.

"It was," answered Dorothy, groaning at the recollection. "I can't imagine what happened to me, but then everything's very queer lately."

With her frock neatly buttoned, Dorothy began to feel more like herself. She thanked Tora sweetly and smilingly invited him to tell them something about himself.

"Yes, do," urged Snip, coming to stand beside her.

"Well," sighed the old man, sticking his needle back in his lapel and taking off his specs, "there's not much to tell. I'm a tailor, as you can readily see. How I got to Blankenburg, I don't know, but there I've been for so long that it gives me rheumatism to think of it. But it's all over now. When we reach this marvelous city you two young people speak of, I shall set up a shop and live happily ever afterward."

"What? With those ears?" shouted Humpy, falling up against a tree. "Oh, I don't believe it!"

"Hush," begged Dorothy and, turning apologetically to the tailor, she whispered earnestly: "You really mustn't mind Humpy. You see his head is stuffed with hair and it makes him kind of ridiculous." The tailor chuckled under his breath and Snip giggled outright.

Just at this moment Kabumpo, magnificent in his pearls and velvet robes, swung ponderously into view.

"Dorothy," trumpeted the Elegant Elephant, stopping a good twenty feet from the little group and elevating his trunk haughtily, "what are you doing with those shabby fellows? Don't you realize you're a Princess. A tailor! Great Grump! Do you expect me to associate with a tailor?"

"But gaze upon his ears," cried Humpy, waving his cloak triumphantly at Tora. "They wag, wiggle and fly off by themselves. And we're hunting a king, a witch and a goose. Hurry up, you elegant old thing, we need you in this picture."

"No we don't, we'll go on by ourselves." Snip looked angrily at Kabumpo and, taking Tora's arm, began to walk off.

"Oh wait!" gasped Dorothy, more embarrassed by Kabumpo's rudeness than by the dummy's ridiculousness. "Kabumpo doesn't mean that. He's really awfully jolly when you get to know him better."

"Don't bother, my dear," Tora smiled, a little sadly. Reaching up he took off both his ears and put them quietly into his pocket. "I never listen to unpleasant conversations," explained the old man simply.

"Good-bye," said Snip, bowing rather stiffly to Dorothy. "If you reach the Emerald City before we do, be sure to tell Ozma about her father."

"Now please don't go," begged Dorothy. "Wait! Wait!" In great distress she dashed over to the Elegant Elephant and poured out the whole story of the lost King 'of Oz and of Mombi's wickedness.

When Tora had so unexpectedly taken off his ears Kahumpo's little eyes had fairly rolled in his head and now, as he listened to Dorothy's strange recital, they began to snap and sparkle with interest. If there was one thing Kabumpo enjoyed, it was being mixed up in a royal adventure. Finding the lost King of Oz would be a very creditable thing, even for an elephant so elegant as himself. It might even gain him an important position at court, thought Kabumpo craftily. And what a choice bit of news to carry home to Pumperdink-that Ozma was not the Queen at all, and that he, Kabumpo the Magnificent, had helped find the real monarch and had been present at the coronation. Already his imagination leaped ahead to this important event.

Concealing, in his pompous and provoking fashion, his real interest and excitement, Kabumpo set Dorothy upon his back and started in a dignified and stately manner toward Tora and Snip.

"I understand you are friends of the lost King of Oz," wheezed Kabumpo grandly, as he came up beside them. "Are you going on to the Emerald City? Care to ride?" he asked graciously. This was as near an apology as Kabumpo ever got.

"Hear! Hear!" spluttered the dummy, who was walking stiffly behind the tailor.

Of course Tora could not do this, as his ears were still in his pocket, but Snip, looking inquiringly up at Dorothy saw her motion earnestly for him to yield. He decided to overlook the elephant's rudeness and gave Kabumpo a signal to lift him up.

"Did she say you were a mutton boy?" asked Kabumpo, as he placed Snip beside the little girl.

"No, a button boy," corrected Dorothy hastily, "from the Kingdom of Kimbaloo, you know."

"Ah yes," grunted Kabumpo condescendingly, "I remember hearing of Kimbaloo-a buttony sort of place across the mountains from Pumperdink."

Snip was about to retort with something short and sassy, when Kabumpo lifted up the tailor and as Tora seemed terribly alarmed by the suddenness of his transit through the air, Snip helped him to settle comfortably instead of talking. He just got Tora firmly seated in time to catch Humpy, whom the Elegant Elephant tossed aloft as carelessly as he would a bale of hay.

"All ready?" boomed Kabumpo importantly. "Well, then here we go." And before anyone could answer he was off, moving swiftly and surely as a battleship through the waving billows of wheat.

"What did you find for lunch?" called Humpy curiously. Snip and Tora hadn't breath to say anything, and Dorothy was too worried about Ozma to want to talk. But Kabumpo, instead of answering, threw up his trunk, sending forth such a volley of shrill bellows that Snip's hair rose on end and the ears in Tora's pocket gave a terrified bounce. Humpy chuckled, as he listened to the shrill trumpeting of the Elegant Elephant. He had thought of a joke!

"Ah, he has eaten a trumpet vine," mused the dummy dreamily, as the noise died away. But it ceased for only a moment, for trumpeting was Kabumpo's way of clearing a path for himself and, determined to reach the capitol before Mombi, the witch, he travelled as never before and, clinging to each other and to Kabumpo's harness and robe, the four riders made the best they could of the worst journey they had ever taken.

CHAPTER 16

Humpy Hailed As King

KABUMPO would never have stopped until he reached the Emerald City itself, had it not been for the mountain. Rushing like an express train from a small dim wood, the Elegant Elephant came unexpectedly upon a steep wall of rock. With a snort of surprise he stopped so sharply that everyone in the party went sailing over his head. Humpy, who was lightest, sailed farthest and, landing first, made a splendid cushion for Snip and Dorothy to fall on. Tora, fortunately, plumped into a patch of gooseberry bushes, so that no one was really hurt.

"Didn't I do that well?" asked the dummy, as Dorothy and Snip jumped up. "Falling's my specialty and falling for you, Princess," he rose and made Dorothy an exceedingly shaky bow, "falling for you, is a real pleasure."

"Well I'm kinda glad you did fall first," gasped the little girl, running to help Snip pull Tora out of the bushes.

"Did I understand Dorothy to say your name was Kabumpo?" inquired the dummy, addressing himself blandly to the Elegant Elephant. Kabumpo nodded without taking his eyes from the mass of jagged stone ahead.

"Well, that accounts for the bumpo. I understand perfectly now," continued Humpy conversationally, as he picked up his crown and set it solemnly on his head. "But next time, next time, old rascal!" He wagged his finger playfully at the Elegant Elephant.

"Old rascal! Old rascal!" sputtered Kabumpo, swinging round in a fury. "How dare you talk to me like that, you good for nothing son of a sofa, you hair brained piece of a night shirt!"

"Well, I may be stuffed with hair, but you're stuffed with hay and I don't see much difference except," Humpy backed rapidly out of Kabumpo's reach, "except that the person who stuffed you didn't finish the job. You're full of wrinkles," he announced judicially.

Kabumpo made a swing at the dummy with his trunk and then, thinking better of it, turned angrily away and, mumbling and wheezing under his breath, began to move majestically toward the rocky barrier. Seeing that no more fun was to be had out of him, Humpy hurried over to the tailor, who was walking unsteadily between Dorothy and Snip. He had put on his ears and was listening attentively to the little girl's remarks about the Elegant Elephant. Dorothy was telling how faithfully Kabumpo had served his master, the Prince of Pumperdink.

"It may be so, it may be so," muttered Tora, gazing after the great beast doubtfully, "but he seems to me a trifle abrupter, almost dangerous!"

"But he's very fast," said Dorothy coaxingly, "and if he had not stopped when he did we'd have been thrown upon the rocks."

"That's so," put in Snip, who had rather enjoyed his wild ride upon the elephant's back.

"Well, well, I daresay I am old fashioned," sighed the tailor, settling his specs resignedly, "and if you and Dorothy can stand this mad mode of travel, I'll try not to mind it either."

"Fall on me next time," invited the dummy generously. Humpy's expression as he made this suggestion was so comical that Tora laughed in spite of himself.

"But how are we going to cross the mountain?" put in Snip dismally. "It's too steep for Kabumpo to climb and I don't see any way 'round do you?"

Dorothy shook her head. "I don't even remember a mountain being here," observed the little girl with a troubled frown. They had joined the Elegant Elephant by this time and, standing in a dejected row, they surveyed the great mass of tumbled rocks-rocks so steep and jagged that even Snip shuddered at the thought of clambering over their perilous peaks.

"I hope you don't expect me to carry you over," sniffed Kabumpo. "Only a bird could cross this. A bird! Great Gollywockers! Look!"

But Dorothy and the others had already seen for themselves. An old woman and a goose were walking calmly through the mountain just as if it did not exist at all-an old woman and a goose! The former was dressed in the simple costume of a Gilliken farmer's wife. In one hand she carried a large basket and with the other she held her stick and a long rope attached to the goose's neck.

"It's Mombi!" cried Dorothy, clutching Snip in terror, for in spite of the disguise, there was no mistaking that wicked old face.

"And Pajuka!" gasped Snip, scarcely daring to breathe. Tora's ears were fluttering like leaves in a gale, and even Kabumpo trembled slightly.

"She must have got her magic powers back," whispered Snip hoarsely, "or how could she walk through a mountain? Oh Dorothy, what shall we do now?"

As it happened, they had time to do nothing, for just then Pajuka looked up and saw the little button boy.

"Snip!" screamed the goose joyfully. Spreading both wings, he flew forward so fast that Mombi had to run to keep up' with him. "I thought she had done for you," panted the goose, paying no attention to Mombi's jerks upon the rope. He began to caress Snip with both wing and bill.

Snip forgot his fright for a moment, in his delight at seeing his old friend again and, dropping on his knees, hugged Pajuka for dear life. Dorothy involuntarily drew back from the witch, who was mumbling a long rigamarole about being on her way to the Emerald City with a fine goose for Ozma of Oz. Humpy, stepping from behind the Elegant Elephant, folded his arms and gazed down benevolently upon the little scene. 'Reminds me of the happy endings in the picture game, observed the dummy indulgently to the tired tailor. "I'm for that bird, and I don't care who knows it," he said.

"Hush!" warned the tailor, looking nervously at Mombi. But at the first sound of Humpy's voice, Pajuka had given a great bounce and, extricating himself from Snip's embrace, came hurtling through the air.

"Master!" shrieked the goose and flapped his wings so violently that the flimsy dummy fell backward over Kabumpo's trunk. With a surly flounce the Elegant Elephant shook him off.

"Monster!" hissed Pajuka, with a wild peck at the elephant's trunk. "How dare you insult his Majesty?" Bowing and weeping alternately he cried shrilly, "The King! At last I have found the King!"

By this time the tailor had got Humpty to his feet, and it is hard to say who was the most astonished of that astonished little group. Mombi dropped her basket with a crash and came over to stare at the green clad figure. Kabumpo, thinking of his late speeches, began to back uncomfortably away.

"But it can't be the King," began Dorothy, catching hold of Snip. "I found Humpty my own self in California and however could he have gotten there?"

"Girl," said the goose sternly, "don't you suppose I know my own Master?"

"And I've seen him before too," murmured the old tailor, half closing his eyes. "Let me think! Let me think!"

"Did you ever see the King yourself?" asked Snip, turning excitedly to Dorothy. The little girl had to acknowledge that she had not, for Mombi had hidden the old monarch away before Dorothy had come to Oz.

"You don't mind my being King, do you Dorothy?" The dummy turned to her coaxingly. "I'd love to be the star in just one picture. Let me be King and you shall be Queen."

"Star! Picture! Queen!" choked Pajuka, gazing from one to the other in bewilderment. "What does this mean? Woman, woman what have you done to the King?"

He turned accusingly to Mombi, but Mombi, brushing him roughly aside, had run up to Humpty and was examining him carefully from all sides. Catching sight of a white tape protruding from the collar of his robe, the old witch jerked him sideways and after one triumphant look at the number on the tape, began to jump up and down like a child on a pogo stick.

"The King!" shrilled Mombi, throwing up her stick. "It is the King of Oz himself! And I am the only one who can restore him to himself and to the throne." She looked sharply at Dorothy, whom she had already recognized, as if daring her to contradict this statement.

"But I don't see how a dummy could be a king," objected Dorothy, still trying to puzzle out the mystery.

"That's because you are only a little girl," explained Pajuka gently. "I suppose you don't see how a goose could be a prime minister either, or how that wicked old woman would dare to turn her King to a stuffed man and his trusted councillor to a goose, or throw an innocent little boy down a well," hissed Pajuka, with an angry glare at Mombi.

"A meddlesome little vagabond," mumbled Mombi, holding her ground stubbornly. She was not going to be frightened out of her reward by anyone now, and stared defiantly at the little company.

"But how did you get out of the well and who are all these people?" puffed Pajuka, looking curiously from Tora to Kabumpo and then letting his eyes rest fondly on the King.

Mombi scarcely listened as Snip told of his fall into Blankenburg, his escape with the tailor and their meeting with Dorothy, Kabumpo and the dummy. She was hurriedly turning over a plan to get Humpy away from his friends. While Pajuka, in his turn, told how he had tried to fly down the well, how he had been caught and tied up by the old witch and forced to accompany her until now, Mombi dropped the rope that was tied to his neck and made a sly move toward the King.

"Your Majesty," whispered Mombi craftily, "may I have a few words with you?"

"Certainly. Certainly!" puffed the dummy King, stepping along pompously at her side. Tora, Snip and Dorothy were so interested in Pajuka's story that they did not notice Mombi's move, but Kabumpo, who had been keeping an astonished eye and ear upon the whole proceeding, stepped noiselessly after the two. Here, reasoned Kabumpo anxiously, was an opportunity to make up for his rude speeches and restore himself to favor with this impossible person who was turning out to be the King.

No sooner had Mombi put a few trees between herself and the others than she grasped Humpy by his hand and began running like the wind.

"We'll hide," grunted the old witch, paying no attention to the dummy's expostulations, "and when they've stopped looking for us we'll go on to the Emerald City and I will restore your Majesty to the throne. But first," panted Mombi, stopping a moment to catch her breath, "you must promise to give me back my magic powers and half of the Kingdom of Oz. Do you promise? You'd better," she added threateningly, giving Humpy a vicious shake.

"But I'm going to the Emerald City with Dorothy," objected the King in dismay. "Let me go, you old ragbag."

"Yes, how dare you shake his Majesty!" thundered an imperious voice and, whirling 'round in a fright, Mombi saw the Elegant Elephant looming up between two trees. He had followed them without a sound and now, snatching Humpy from the clutches of the old witch, placed him carefully upon his back.

With a cry of rage, Mombi tried to get away, but Kabumpo was too quick for her. Seizing the witch in his trunk and shaking her to and fro like a rattle, he ran trumpeting back to the others. They had just discovered Humpy's absence and Pajuka with a hoarse shriek came flying toward the Elegant Elephant.

"She was trying to steal the King!" panted Kabumpo indignantly. "Shall I throw her over the mountain or step on her?"

"Step on her," commanded the dummy, extending two fingers of his right hand as he had seen kings in the movies do time and time again. Mombi gave a terrible screech and Dorothy and Snip looked uneasily at one another.

"The King has spoken," honked Pajuka, settling down gravely beside the dummy, "therefore let the sentence be carried out."

Dorothy closed her eyes and clung to Snip, but just then, the calm voice of the tailor intervened.

"Your Highness," began Tora gravely, "as this woman is the only one in Oz who can restore you to your proper self, do you think this step a wise one?"

The tailor's ears fluttered anxiously as he waited for the King's decision. For an instant Humpy looked doubtfully at Mombi, then with a sigh lowered his fingers. "Perhaps it would be a rash step," he admitted regretfully.

"Well, some steps must be taken," honked Pajuka angrily. "Are we to put up with this treachery forever?"

"No, just until she restores the King," answered Tora mildly.

"Then I shall step on her," promised Kabumpo, giving Mombi another shake.

"That's right," said Dorothy, glad to have the dreadful business delayed. "Mombi must first restore the King."

"I'll not do it without a reward," screamed the witch defiantly. "Do I get a reward or not?"

The others were silent but Humpy, again extending his fingers, announced grandly, "You shall be rewarded as you deserve!" He winked at Pajuka as he said this, but Mombi apparently was satisfied and stopped squirming.

"Well, I can't do it here," she muttered sulkily. "The transformation was made near the Emerald City and the enchantment cannot be broken until we reach the green country."

"Then let's go on to the Emerald City," proposed Dorothy eagerly. Once there, reflected the little girl, Ozma herself could settle the whole troublesome business. Somehow Dorothy could not imagine Oz without the little fairy as its Queen, and while she was glad indeed to have found the lost King, she could not get used to the idea of Humpy on the throne and administering affairs in Oz.

Humpy, himself, was enjoying it all tremendously. He remembered nothing of his past, it is true, but the present was sufficiently interesting and exciting to make up for everything.

"On to the Emerald City!" he commanded, pompously waving his arms.

"I hear and I obey, your Majesty," wheezed Kabumpo, and hardly giving the two children and the old tailor time to climb aboard, he was off, still holding Mombi fast in his trunk.

"But what about the mountain?" asked Snip, as it loomed up suddenly ahead.

"Watch," called Pajuka and while Kabumpo swayed uncertainly before it, he flew straight through the wall of rocks. Like many another mountain when you come right to it, this was no mountain at all only a shadow mountain.

"No wonder Mombi could walk through," sighed Snip, greatly relieved that the witch had not recovered her magic powers.

Mombi's Magic

THE thoughts of the little company, as they sped toward the Emerald City, were many and varied. Mombi, suspended precariously in Kabumpo's trunk, smiled darkly to herself, for Mombi, as usual, had a plan to outwit her enemies. She could not remember changing the King to a dummy at all, and had at first doubted that Humpy really was the King, but when she had read upon his collar the forgotten green magic formula, even Mombi was convinced. All that was now necessary to dispel the enchantment was to reach the Emerald City.

"Once there, I'll show them," the old witch chuckled wickedly to herself, as she thought of what would happen then.

Pajuka, looking at the stuffed King beside him, was wondering sadly whether he and his royal master would ever be quite the same, whether the good old Oz days they had enjoyed together would ever return again. Fluttering his wings, and keeping his balance with difficulty, the poor goose dreamed longingly of the comfortable chairs in the old hunting lodge, of his pipe and his smoking jacket with sixteen pockets.

Snip was trying to puzzle out how the King had ever fallen into California, how Tora had got his strange ears, how Pajuka would look as a man and how Ozma would like giving up the throne to her father.

Tora, holding fast to his precious ears, had closed his eyes and begun to plan a blue suit for Snip and a velvet cloak for Dorothy. He had taken a great fancy to the little girl. "Let the other fellows worry about this king," thought the tailor with a tired sigh.

Dorothy, for her part, was trying to imagine what would happen when they reached the capitol. She felt sure Mombi meant some mischief but, comforting herself with the thought of Sir Hokus of Pokes and the other brave inhabitants of the castle, she finally stopped worrying and began to wonder how Humpy would look when he was changed to himself and what would become of her apartment in the palace. It was all so strange and confusing that Dorothy could hardly wait to see how it would turn out, and watched anxiously for the first sight of the green towers and spires of Ozma's palace.

Humpy was too busy holding on to his crown and to Kabumpo to think of anything, but the Elegant Elephant was busily considering the appearance he would make at the King's coronation. "I'll just have that old tailor cut me a white velvet robe," decided Kabumpo importantly. "I'll wear my pearls and a satin bow on my tail and

Just then, Snip gave a little scream of delight, for, spreading out suddenly before them like a picture from fairyland itself, was the enchanting Emerald City of Oz. Its lacy turrets and spires sparkled with emeralds, its marble streets glowed with the same precious stones. The air was sweet with roses and honeysuckle and everywhere were flowering parks and tree lined avenues.

Humpy, Pajuka, Snip and the tailor were simply stunned by the magnificence of the capitol, but to Dorothy, Mombi and Kabumpo, the Emerald City was an old story. Accustomed to its beauty and familiar with its grandeur, they scarcely gave it a second glance. Many of the town's people, recognizing

Dorothy, waved cheerfully as they passed and all too soon for Snip, who could have ridden up and down its enchanted streets all day, the Elegant Elephant charged into the royal park and approached the Palace of Emeralds itself.

"Master," choked the goose, touching Humpy tremulously with his wing, "our castle was never so fine as this. To think that all of this belongs to you!" Pajuka stretched his neck exultantly. "I wonder if there's a pipe anywhere in the castle?" he puffed suddenly.

"You shall have twenty pipes, my good goose!" promised the dummy. "Everybody shall have a pipe!"

Dorothy and Snip giggled a little at this. Then, as Kabumpo stepped upon the broad portico, Pajuka, remembering Mombi's past threats, began to scream hoarsely, "The witch-don't let her go, don't let her go, whatever you do! She'll steal Ozma's magic and destroy us all. Hold on to Mombi!"

Kabumpo had been on the point of dropping the old woman so he could pull the jewelled bell rope, but at Pajuka's warning he tightened his grip.

"Pray alight, Dorothy, and announce his Majesty!" puffed the Elegant Elephant, forgetting that not more than an hour ago he had called the King a piece of a night shirt. Dorothy and Snip slid down together and, both seizing the rope, set it to jingling merrily.

"Won't they be surprised," murmured Dorothy, looking over her shoulder at Kabumpo and his strange passengers. "Won't they be surprised when they see who is here? But why don't they come to the door?"

Why indeed? For the very simple reason, that there was no one to come-not even the cook's boy. For that morning, Jellia Jamb, Ozma's small serving maid, looking from the castle window, had seen her mistress and the little group who were with her in the garden vanish before her eyes. Rushing frantically through the palace, she spread the dire news, and immediately the entire household had set out to find the lost ones-the entire household from the tallest courtier to the tiniest page. Tik Tok might have enlightened them, but the machine man had run down. No one thought to wind him up and even Tik Tok did not know that Ozma and her friends had gone to Morrow.

In puzzled dismay, Dorothy pressed her nose to the diamond panes in the door. Then, seeing that the great hall was empty, she tried the knob. In their excitement the searchers had left the door unlocked and, with a little exclamation of surprise, Dorothy opened it and motioned for Kabumpo to follow with his passengers.

Kabumpo was bitterly disappointed that there was no one to witness his grand entry with the King and, when they reached the throne room itself without encountering anyone, he looked positively crestfallen. "A fine welcome for his Highness!" he grunted irritably. "Where is the court? Where are the attendants. A thing like this would never have happened in Pumperdink!"

"Ha, ha!" croaked Mombi maliciously, but subsided at once when the Elegant Elephant gave her a shake. Pajuka and Tora had alighted with Snip and all were staring about the beautiful room in admiration.

But Kabumpo was still angry. "Is this tailor to be admitted to the presence?" he demanded loftily, fixing his eyes upon Tora's shabby suit. "In Pumperdink such things are not done."

Dorothy was too worried over the strange silence in the castle to bother with Kabumpo's saucy speeches, but the dummy, falling head-long from the Elegant Elephant's back, put his arm affectionately through Tora's.

Humpy waved Kabumpo aside and pulled the old tailor to a seat beside him. Tora shoved his spectacles up on his forehead and looked gravely at the pompous dummy.

"Let him stay by all means," said Humpy condescendingly. "Every King must have his tailor and he's mine. Besides, has anyone else in this room flying ears, I want to know?"

"Well, I prefer my ears on," grunted the Elegant Elephant disdainfully.

"I'm glad they're on you," sniffed Pajuka. He felt unaccountably drawn to the gentle old tailor, but Tora himself was too taken up with his splendid surroundings to mind Kabumpo's remarks. Just then Humpy, catching sight of the glittering emerald throne, let go of the tailor's arm and started running across the room. The others gave little heed, for certainly it was right and fitting for the King to occupy his proper place in the palace.

Mombi, seeing the dummy's move, fairly trembled with excitement. Without being at all aware of it, Humpy was playing directly into her hands and as he sank down upon the throne the witch gave a shriek of triumph. Held fast through she was in Kabumpo's trunk, her arms were still free. Beginning with Snip and going on to Dorothy, Mombi began to count, "One-two-three-four-five-six-seven!"

At seven her finger pointed to Pajuka, whose every feather stood erect with terror. Snatching two buttons from Kabumpo's robe, Mombi popped them into her mouth and shouted the magic formula on the dummy's collar. "202 B E-10 B-4 7," ran the number, but as Mombi said it, it sounded like this, "Two ought to be eaten before seven."

That done, Mombi glared at the King. "I command you to assume your proper form," she screamed.

Well, surely nothing could have been worse than the next happening. With a grinding, crashing suddenness, the palace began to sink, gaining speed as it went. Down, down, down, till the windows and doorways were blotted out with earth and mud and the whole company lost in the choke of utter and awful darkness. Of all the screams in the room, Mombi's was loudest. Never in her darkest imaginings had Mombi anticipated anything like this! What unknown and dreadful magic had she set in motion?

CHAPTER 18

Ozma's Odd Home-Coming

WHILE the dummy King and his friends were making their way to the Emerald City from the North, Ozma and her faithful followers were plodding wearily up from the South through a lonely section of the Quadling Country. The red house in the hunting park had been totally deserted but the Scarecrow, climbing an old windmill nearby, had seen dimly through the tree tops the glittering spires of the capitol.

Considerably cheered therefore, the little party had continued its journey home.

At about the time Kabumpo was making his grand entry into the city, Scraps, turning to ask Sir Hokus a question, noticed that the Knight was fidgeting about in an extremely odd and alarming manner. They were a bit ahead of the others and for a time Scraps regarded her companion with her head on one side. But silence is not one of the Patch Work Girl's strong points and as the Knight continued to squirm and bounce, she stopped short in the road.

"Why do you jump from side to side and rattle about like a salt shaker? Have you fleas?" inquired Scraps, looking sharply at Sir Hokus. "Is there an ant in your armor, or what?"

"Something-something's tickling me," confessed the Knight, wriggling his shoulders desperately. "Something like-like a sparrow. Ouch!" gasped Sir Hokus, giving himself a shake that unfastened the top buckle of his mailed shirt.

At Sir Hokus' cry, Scraps, too, gave a startled shriek, for out of the Knight's shirt sped the golden goose feather he had tucked there for safe-keeping. Before either of them had recovered from their surprise it poised in the air and began to write furiously on the Knight's burnished shield, while Scraps and Sir Hokus watched breathlessly.

"The King of Oz is in the palace," announced the feather with a flourish, then fluttered down lifelessly in the dust.

"Odds blood! It thinks I'm a blackboard," grunted Sir Hokus indignantly, and nearly bending double to get a glimpse of the writing. "Ozma, Betsy, Trot, Wizard, come quickly!"

At the excited cries, the others, who were just around a bend in the road, broke into a run. Sir Hokus, puffing and still indignant, pointed to his shield. The second message of the magic quill was as amazing as the first, which had sent them to Morrow.

"Well, that saves us hunting for him," observed the Scarecrow, cheerfully picking up the goose quill. "He must have found himself, you know. Shall I keep this my dear?"

"Please do," sighed Ozma, staring hard at the message, which the Knight was vainly trying to rub from his shield, "and let's hurry. Just think, my father is in the castle! Hurry! Hurry! We're almost home!" And setting an example herself, the little fairy girl fairly flew down the road.

"I for one shall not recognize this King," shouted Scraps, running awkwardly after Ozma.

"I wonder whether he'll let us live in the castle?" puffed Trot, who was running hand in hand with Betsy Bobbin. "I kinda wish he'd never turned up, don't you?"

Betsy nodded emphatically, and it must be confessed that all of the others shared Trot's wish. But as Ozma herself seemed so happy at her father's restoration, such thoughts seemed almost treasonable and no one but Scraps voiced his real opinion.

Ozma, being a fairy, did not tire as easily as the rest, but even Ozma had to slacken her pace before they came to the Emerald City. Indeed, it was a hard two-hour journey before they reached the outskirts of the capitol. Hot, tired and dusty, they hurried through the quiet streets. No one in the city had discovered Ozma's absence, for the searchers in the palace had gone off without notifying anyone, so they stared in surprise at the breathless little company. Without stopping to explain, the royal party

hurried on to the palace itself, for was not the King already there and waiting for them?

Sir Hokus was the first to burst through the tall hedge enclosing the royal residence. He paused, brushed his mailed fist across his eyes and then fell with a crash to the jewelled walk. The Scarecrow, close behind, promptly fell on top of him and Scraps, the Wizard and the little girls, bumping into the two, stopped short in their tracks. For where the castle had stood, there was nothing at all excepting a stretch of lawn, a little greener, perhaps, than in other parts of the garden, but so smooth, no one would have suspected that a castle ever had stood there!

"The King is in the castle, but where is the castle?" groaned the Scarecrow, raising his head and peering over the Knight's shoulder.

"Gone!" wailed the little Queen, rushing forward in dismay. "Everything's gone!" And overcome by the fatigues and disappointments of the day, Ozma threw herself down upon the grass and wept as if her heart would break. Betsy and Trot did their best to comfort her, but what could they say? What could anyone say in the face of so amazing a calamity?

"Come out you villain King and thief!

Bring back our home, you robber Chief!"

screamed Scraps, making little dashes backward and forward. Of course Scraps did not expect the King to come out but, as if in answer to her call, there was a shudder and rumble below.

The rumbling continued, grew worse and worse and finally, with an explosion like forty-nine roman candles going off at once, the towers, turrets and gleaming roof of the castle burst through the earth and, impaling the frightened company upon its spires, carried them kicking and struggling into the air. Up, up, and up shot the castle, till the entire structure was standing on its proper foundations. The flag pole had caught Sir Hokus between his mailed shirt and his armor and the Knight was spinning around like a weather cock in a gale. Ozma and the little girls had fortunately been carried aloft on one of the rounded domes and while their position was extremely precarious it was at least comfortable. Scraps hung limply over a filigreed balcony, the Wizard beside her, and the Scarecrow dangled from a spire.

"Wait! Don't move any of you," coughed the strawman. "Wait, I'll fall down and get a ladder!"

And down he plunged!

CHAPTER 19

The Wizard Takes a Hand

THE people clinging to the roof of the palace were no more puzzled and alarmed than the ones rattling around beneath the roof. To understand all of these strange and confusing events, we must go back to Mombi's incantation. Mombi, you see, had used the magic formula without the King's robe. Indeed, Mombi had forgotten that part of the transformation entirely, and in consequence the great disaster predicted by the Fairy Queen Lurline had occurred.

When the palace had sunk so suddenly into the earth, Dorothy and her companions had been too startled to even move. But when it finally settled down and things grew quiet again, Dorothy, feeling her way cautiously, pressed a small radio button in the wall. Fortunately the lighting system had not been thrown out of order and, as the emerald lamps flooded the throne room with their reassuring glow, everyone gave a sigh of relief.

Kabumpo had wound his trunk around one of the palace pillars and closed his eyes. Now he let go and looked fearfully around him. Mombi had rolled into a corner and Pajuka lay flat on his back with his feet in the air. Tora's ears had flown off from the shock, carrying his spectacles with them, and the poor tailor was uncertainly groping his way toward the door. Snip, who suffered nothing worse than a bump over the eye, ran hastily to his assistance, leading him gently to a large arm chair. Sinking into its comfortable depths, Tora pulled out a red handkerchief and began mopping first his cheeks and then his brow and muttering unintelligibly to himself.

Humpy was sprawled on the floor, his crown jammed down over his nose and his head resting on the last step of the dais. As Dorothy ran to help him up, he made a feeble gesture of protest.

"The kingdom has fallen," puffed the dummy indignantly, "and that lets me out. If this is the way you treat your sovereigns, I'm through. I resign! I abdicate. Let me be the bell boy, or the furnace man. Why even in the movies I have never been treated like this. It's a crime. It's an outrage!" coughed Humpy, struggling to a sitting position and trying to pry his crown upward.

"Now Humpy," began Dorothy reprovingly, "you're talking like a dummy instead of a King. Just wait--"

"I am a dummy," insisted the poor fellow, feeling of himself to make sure. "Has that old wretch changed me one hair's breadth by her villainous magic? Oh, to think I should have sunk so low!"

"She's a fraud," hissed Pajuka, who had also picked himself up. "Woman, how dare you sink the castle in this shocking and informal manner? Where are we and what is to become of his Majesty?"

"Look out, she's trying to get away," warned Snip. The little button boy was right, for at each question Mombi was creeping nearer to the door.

"No you don't!" shrilled Kabumpo, snatching her back with his trunk. "I'll teach you to sink elephants like a ship and play such tricks upon the King!" He began shaking her backward and forward till her very bones rattled.

"Undo this mischief at once. Give me back my own shape. Restore the King!" screamed Pajuka, flapping his wings in Mombi's face.

"Raise up this castle or I'll step on you!" promised Kabumpo furiously.

Mombi looked pleadingly at Dorothy and Snip, but the little boy and girl felt now that any punishment was too good for the old witch.

"Give me time," muttered Mombi, casting uneasy glances from one to the other. "The formula should have restored the King, but something went wrong. I must have more time."

"Here, take it." Stumbling across the room, Humpty pressed a dollar watch into the old witch's hands. "Here's all the time in the world," said the dummy dolefully, "but don't ask me to be King again. Let Kabumpo sit on the throne and see how he likes it."

Turning his back upon the company, Humpty began to run after Tora's ears. Fastened together by the tailor's spectacles, they were flapping wildly around the apartment. Pajuka groaned and covered his eyes with his wing, for the honest goose could not bear to see his old master conducting himself so foolishly.

"Well, what shall I do with her?" Kabumpo shook Mombi again and snapped his eyes angrily at Dorothy.

"She got us into this trouble and now she must get us out," decided the little girl wisely. "Do you think you can?"

The old witch nodded and, at a sign from Dorothy, Kabumpo let her go, at the same time keeping a close guard upon her. Mombi, it must be confessed, was as surprised at the fall of the castle as anyone else, nor could she account for the failure of the magic formula. Hemmed in a corner by the gigantic Kabumpo, she began mumbling in magic and making queer passes in the air just to gain time.

Dorothy watched anxiously, but Snip, who had already had an idea of his own, tiptoed across the room and picked up Mombi's basket. In a sudden flash Snip recalled the skyward flight of the cats in Catty Corners. Was there any more of the marvelous baking powder? Tumbling everything out of the basket, Snip fumbled hurriedly among its contents and with a little cry of triumph found what he was looking for—a small purple can of the magical powder. And, better still, printed in Mombi's crooked writing, were the directions for its use. This is what Snip read:

"To raise hair—one drop in water.

"To raise the roof—one pinch down the chimney.

"To raise the rent—five teaspoon's full in vinegar.

"To raise a castle or city empty entire contents of can on spot desired. Sprinkle with water and count ten."

Seizing a flower vase from a nearby stand, Snip dumped out the powder and moistened it from the vase. Then, hardly daring to think what would happen, the little button boy began to count.

With a roar as sudden and frightful as when it had fallen, the castle shot upward, gaining speed as it went, up, up, up, till the dark earth was left far below and the massive structure stood on its rightful foundations again.

How Ozma and her friends were caught upon its roof, we already know, for Snip had set off the powder, just as the Little Queen flung herself upon the grass to weep.

While the Scarecrow, with a long ladder from the garden, was helping those on the roof to get

down, Snip was hurrying around the throne room helping those inside to get up, for the final jar as the castle settled had knocked everyone over-even Kabumpo.

"Is this exciting enough for you?" asked Dorothy, crawling out from beneath a sofa. The Elegant Elephant groaned, but made no attempt to arise, and Dorothy, rushing over to Mombi, dragged her hurriedly to her feet.

"Now that you've raised the castle," puffed the little girl determinedly, "suppose you transform the King and Pajuka!"

"Mombi didn't raise the castle, I did it myself!" cried Snip delightedly.

"You did!" gasped Kabumpo, rolling over in astonishment. "How?"

Snip held up the empty can and, while Mombi glowered angrily, he explained his use of the marvelous baking powder. Tora's ears were still off so the poor tailor was as bewildered as ever, but Snip nodded to him encouragingly and had just finished his recital when the door in the hall burst open and Ozma, in a perfect flutter of excitement, swept into the throne room-Ozma and everyone who had accompanied her to Morrow.

"The King!" gasped Ozma faintly, for she was rather short of breath. "Where is the King?" Her glance travelled in alarm from Mombi to Pajuka. The goose was waddling after Humpy. Paying no attention to the rise of the castle, the dummy was mounted on a chair in a last effort to capture Tora's ears.

"Dorothy," wailed the sorely tried and tired little fairy, "where is my father?"

"Here! Here!" honked Pajuka, doing his best to make Humpy turn 'round. "This is the King of Oz!"

Dorothy, astonished though she was by Ozma's sudden entry, hastened to break the shock of her disappointment. "You must remember," she explained hastily, "he is not quite himself!"

"He's bewitched-we're all bewitched!" groaned the goose, flapping his wings despairingly.

"Well, who hit me with the castle?" demanded Scraps, staring around indignantly. "I told you the King was a dunce!"

The little girls, Sir Hokus and the Wizard were regarding the stuffed man's actions with horror and dismay.

"Are you my father?" faltered Ozma, approaching the dummy timidly. "Why, where have you been all these years?"

"In the pictures," answered Humpy in a matter-of-fact voice. With a final snatch he had captured the tailor's ears and was more interested in them than in his daughter. "I double for the stars, my dear. I fall and die and all that sort of thing. Ask Dorothy, she knows all about me."

"He's been leading a double life," murmured the Scarecrow, looking solemnly at Sir Hokus of Pokes. Then, facing the King, he asked frankly, "Are you a dub or a double?"

"He's bewitched, I tell you," puffed Pajuka, trying to get some attention. "Make her disenchant us!" He shot his neck angrily in Mombi's direction and immediately everyone's attention was directed to the old witch, whom the Elegant Elephant still guarded in the corner.

"Why, there's Kabumpo!" cried Ozma and then, catching her first glimpse of the tailor without ears, she sank limply into a chair and began to fan herself with a doily. "Everything, everything's so queer," murmured the little Queen, looking appealingly at Betsy and Trot.

"Fetch the Green Book of Magic from the library," ordered the Wizard, giving Sir Hokus a push. "Fetch the book and I will put an end to this nonsense!"

Sir Hokus made haste to obey and, before Dorothy could explain all that had happened or introduce her friends the Knight came back with the green book.

"Here, give me my ears," cried the tailor, who had missed most of the excitement. Snatching them from Humpy, he clapped them quickly in place and turned toward the Wizard. The Wizard looked slightly cross-eyed from astonishment, but swallowing quickly and, determined not to delay the King's restoration another minute, began to flip over the leaves of the book.

"This is it, Incantation No.980!" panted the little man joyfully. "Two ought to be eaten before seven.

"That's not an incantation, that's Humpy's number," cried Dorothy, pulling out the white tag on the dummy's collar.

"Why, that's what Mombi tried," put in Snip anxiously. "Look out! Something else awful will happen!"

But the Wizard waved them impatiently aside and, throwing the royal robe he had carried all the way from Morrow about Humpy's shoulders, pushed him down upon the throne.

"All but seven leave the room," he ordered crisply and after a short delay the order was carried out. The seven who remained watched tensely as the Wizard approached the stuffed King. Popping two small crackers into his mouth, he gazed fixedly at the dummy. "I command you to assume your natural shape," choked the Wizard, throwing up his arms impressively.

"The King's himself! Long live the King!" shrieked Pajuka, falling flat upon his bill.

Everyone crowded forward to see what happened to Humpy-but the dummy remained as he was.

"Why he's not changed at all," cried Scraps scornfully, and the Patch Work Girl was perfectly right. Except for a slight slump to the left, Humpy had not even changed his position.

"Two ought to be eaten before seven! Two ought to be eaten before seven!" muttered the Wizard, beginning to pace anxiously up and down.

"Two what?" asked Snip. "Are you sure you've eaten the right thing? Mombi swallowed buttons."

"Well, I'm no ostrich and the foot note says two of anything," answered the little man, keeping

his place in the book with his forefinger and gazing at the dummy in exasperation.

CHAPTER 20

The Lost King Is Found

THE Wizard of Oz was puzzled and mortified. His magic seemed to be no magic at all. The little man was silent. He could think of nothing but his failure.

"Let's all sit down in a circle and think," proposed the Scarecrow, taking Ozma's hand, for he could see the little fairy was ready to cry with disappointment. "The goose feather said the King was in the castle, so he must be here," he insisted cheerfully. "Let Dorothy tell her story and we'll tell ours and then perhaps we can find out what's wrong with our magic."

"Now you're talking sense," approved Scraps, plumping down beside the straw man. "Have Dorothy explain this old goose, this button-button-who's-got-the-button boy and the fellow with the fluttering ears."

"I guess that would be best," sighed Dorothy. So in less than a wink that whole strange company, with Humpy in the center, dropped down in a circle upon the floor. Kabumpo, holding Mombi fast in his trunk, stood just behind Dorothy, putting in a word now and then or giving Mombi a shake when she objected to any part of the story.

Ozma and her friends could scarcely repress their astonishment and surprise as Dorothy recounted her wonderful adventures with the dummy and told of Snip's exciting journey with the goose and the old witch. Indeed, as the story proceeded, they began to regard Snip and Pajuka with growing admiration and respect, for certainly these two had played an unforgettable part in the history of Oz.

When Dorothy told how Snip had raised the castle with Mombi's baking powder, the company burst into such loud cheers and cries of approval that the little button boy tried to hide behind the tailor. Tora, himself, came in for a goodly share of the interest too, and he smiled pleasantly as Dorothy explained his singular ears and described his escape from the Blanks. When Dorothy had finished, Ozma quickly related all that had happened in the Emerald City and in Morrow. She told of the deserted castle and the mysterious messages, and the Scarecrow gravely passed around the golden quill

"I seem to remember this," puffed Pajuka when it had come to him. "Ah, I know! It is the magic quill the King gave me on my last birthday in the castle. It always warned one or the other when either was in danger and I had it in my pocket when Mombi turned me to a goose.

"And I pulled it out when I fell down the well!" cried Snip excitedly.

"And it returned to the spot where the old castle had stood," put in the Wizard, leaning forward sagely.

"Well, that explains the feather, but who will explain the King?" demanded the Scarecrow,

looking at the dummy with his head on one side.

"I'm about tired of being explained," mumbled Humpy sulkily. "If you don't pretty soon decide something, I'll go back to America. I've fallen and I've risen and now I want to sit still."

"Perhaps," suggested the tired tailor timidly, for he felt shy in the presence of so many celebrities, "perhaps Humpy is not the lost King at all! The feather said the King was in the palace, but it did not say the dummy was King."

"Bless me," cried the scarecrow tossing up his hat, "his brain works as fast as his ears. That is an idea!" It had not occurred to any of them that Humpy might not be the King, but now they began to look at one another questioningly.

"But he's the image of Pastoria!" insisted Pajuka. "Don't you suppose I know my own sovereign? Ozma my dear, is this dummy not like your father?"

Ozma nodded. "But it wouldn't do any harm to look around," she added thoughtfully.

"Come on," cried the Scarecrow waving his hat, "we'll hunt from cellar to garret!"

"Keep a trunk on that witch!" called Scraps to the Elegant Elephant, as they all jumped up and started to follow the Scarecrow from the room.

"But wait!" exclaimed the tired tailor, catching hold of the straw man's arm. "How do know you are not the King yourself?"

"Me the King!" ejaculated the Scarecrow falling back against a pillar.

"Well, Mombi could easily have changed you to a Scarecrow," mused Tora, but Dorothy hastily shook her head, for the Scarecrow's past was well known and though he had been proved an Emperor of Silver Island, she felt he could not be the lost King of Oz.

"Well, somebody in this castle is King," insisted Tora positively.

"But how shall we know?" gasped Dorothy, while the others looked equally puzzled.

"Find the man who fits the King's robe," cried Tora, waving his tape measure. "Try him," he finished, indicating Sir Hokus of Pokes.

"How did you ever think of that?" asked the Wizard admiringly. "Find the man who fits the robe! Why it's as simple as arithmetic. But how did you ever think of it?"

"Well, being a tailor, it occurred to me at once," answered Tora modestly. "The robe fits the dummy perfectly, so I thought at first he must be the King, but when the magic failed to work I concluded that he wasn't."

Mombi sniffed scornfully as the Knight stepped forward but Dorothy and Ozma, remembering Sir Hokus's strange history, felt that he might easily be the lost King of Oz.

Again all but seven left the throne room, and the tailor placed the King's robes carefully about the Knight's shoulders. Then the Wizard, taking two more crackers, gravely repeated the magic formula.

Ozma kept her eyes fixed intently on Sir Hokus. She rather hoped he would turn out to be her father, for she was very fond of the blustery Knight. But nothing at all happened after the Wizard's incantation and Sir Hokus stepped down from the throne with real relief.

"Odds buckles and bonnets, my dear, I would like to be your father but not your King," sighed the Knight. "I prefer fighting to governing any day."

The Wizard cast his eye about for another candidate of proper size and shape to fit the robe, but no one in the room seemed to qualify.

"You're wasting time," grunted Kabumpo irritably. "This person," he waved loftily at the old tailor, "this person had better have kept out of it. What does a tailor know of magic?"

Dorothy looked reprovingly at the Elegant Elephant and just then, catching a glimpse of the Soldier with the Green Whiskers in the doorway, rushed over and pulled him into the room. The Soldier with the Green Whiskers is the entire army of Oz and, while not noted for his bravery, is a great favorite in the Emerald City. Ever since the disappearance of Ozma, he had been hiding in the castle cellar, terribly frightened by its fall and rise. Finally he had screwed up enough courage to venture forth and investigate. Too astonished to move, he had listened to the proceedings in the throne room and watched the Wizard's magic experiments.

"Try him!" puffed Dorothy, hurrying him toward the throne. As the tailor carefully adjusted the robe, everyone gasped at the fit and becomingness of the green garment. It quite transformed the timid old soldier and, complacently stroking his beard, he waited for the Wizard's formula to take effect. But again, nothing at all happened and, dashing the green book of magic into a corner, the Wizard rushed out of the room. At last he had had an idea of his own. He would look in the magic picture and discover at once who was the missing King.

Meanwhile Tora, looking very apologetic, had taken the cloak from the grand army's shoulders. "I was wrong," sighed the tailor shaking his head sorrowfully, "and now there is no one else to try."

Everyone joined in the tailor's sigh, for the afternoon had lengthened into evening and they were still as far as ever from solving the mystery. At each disappointment Pajuka had grown more gloomy and now, waddling up to Mombi, he cried angrily, "Woman, what have you done with the king? Speak! Speak, or I'll peck off your nose!"

"Yes, say something!" shrilled Kabumpo, shaking her violently.

"I remember nothing! I remember nothing! Let me go!" wailed the old witch, howling dismally.

Mombi's screams, Pajuka's threats and Kabumpo's trumpeting almost drowned out another voice that had risen triumphantly above the confusion. It was Snip. Jumping to his feet and running across the room, the little button boy flung his arms 'round the old tailor.

"You never tried it on yourself! You never tried it on yourself!" panted Snip, trembling with impatience. "Here, give it to me!"

While Kabumpo sniffed and the others watched half heartedly, the little boy wrapped the King's robe around the tired tailor, popped two sugar lumps into his mouth and shouted hoarsely, "Two

ought to be eaten before seven! I command you to resume your natural shape!"

For as long as you could count ten there was absolute silence. Then a deep voice, very rough and husky, called wildly, "The King! Long live the King!"

"Pajuka!" cried the tired tailor. Rushing joyously down the steps of the throne, he threw both arms 'round a fat, jolly old gentleman. The tired tailor, did I say? But no! He was the tired tailor no longer! The rounded shoulders had straightened up under the velvet robe, the tired eyes sparkled with pleasure and kindness. Tora, the tailor, no longer, but Pastoria, the King, stood embracing his prime minister, for the same green formula that had restored his majesty had also released Pajuka from his weary enchantment.

"I remember! I remember! I turned him to a tailor and flung him down a well!" squealed Mombi, but in the excitement no one even heard her. The suddenness of the King's restoration had taken even Snip by surprise, but recovering quickly they all pressed forward.

Humpy was the first to reach the throne. "Glad you got the job," grinned the dummy cheerfully. "But let me be your double, old fellow. I'll fall or die for you any time." Making his word good at once, Humpy tripped over the King's foot and fell flat upon his nose.

"Why he is your double," gasped Dorothy eagerly. "The very image of you."

"King, King, double King,

never get him back again!"

screamed the Patch Work Girl, and from then on the uproar was tremendous. The courtiers and servants, back from the long day's search, came crowding into the throne room, and when they heard the whole story from the Soldier with the Green Whiskers they added their voices to the general clamor.

"Why the names should have told us," whispered Dorothy to Snip, whom she had dragged into a corner for the confidence. "Tora the tailor and Pastoria, the King. How did we ever miss it?"

Snip shook his head and looked over contentedly at his two best friends. It seemed as if Ozma and her father would never stop hugging one another but at last, with his little daughter on his right and faithful Pajuka on his left, with Humpy standing importantly behind him and Snip in his lap, the King sat down upon his throne and insisted upon hearing all that had happened during his weary exile -- for the years he had been in Blankenburg had been blank indeed.

Taking turns, Dorothy, Trot and Ozma did their best to satisfy him. Then Pastoria, himself, told how Lurline, Queen of the Fairy Band, had come to his shop, tried to disenchant him and when she found Mombi's magic too strong for her, had bestowed upon him his remarkable flying ears.

"I'm going to miss those ears," sighed the King, touching his tight-on ones regretfully, "but it's fine to be back just the same and to find my own dear little girl again!"

"There are still two things I don't understand," mused Dorothy, as Pastoria finished speaking.

"Why did I change size in California, and how was it you could not get away from Blankenburg till Snip helped you?"

"Both very easy to account for," explained the Wizard of Oz, who was glad to have some part in clearing up the mysteries. "If you had lived in America as long as you have lived in Oz, you would be quite a young lady by now, so of course, when you reached California, you resumed your proper age.

"Then I'm never going back," decided Dorothy, recalling her strange experience with a shudder, "for I'm never going to grow up at all."

"The King was released by Snip," continued the Wizard, paying no attention to Dorothy's remarks, "because kindness and generosity always dull green magic, and, while Snip could not entirely restore the King, he broke part of the enchantment."

There was still so much to wonder and exclaim about and they were all by this time so famished with hunger that Ozma ordered up a splendid feast and in all the annals of Oz there has never been a more delightful nor a merrier one.

The King and Ozma sat at the head of the long table, Snip and Pajuka at the foot, while ranged between were all of the adventurers and all the dear celebrities of Oz. Mombi had been securely locked up in the cellar with a supper of bread and milk and Kabumpo, free from his troublesome charge, had three bales of hay, nicely mixed with peanuts.

Snip, looking sideways at Pajuka, marveled to think how he had once carried the huge Prime Minister through the forest. There was still something in Pajuka's walk and expression that reminded Snip of the white goose, for all during the evening he was at some pains to conceal his yawns.

Well, with one dainty coming after the other, and one story following the next, the dinner proceeded gaily enough, till no one, not even the Hungry Tiger, could eat another bite. And then it was that Pastoria rose and, turning to Ozma, furnished the last surprise of that exceedingly surprising day.

"I am rejoiced," began the King in his deep, pleasant voice, "to find this beautiful castle and city, built during my absence by our clever Wizard, and to see that the prosperity and greatness of Oz have increased during my exile. Feeling that this is largely due to the wise rule of my lovely little daughter, I now and hereby abdicate in her favor!"

Removing the emerald crown the Scarecrow had hastily brought from the treasury, the King placed it solemnly on Ozma's dark curls.

"But you're not going away!" cried Ozma, catching hold of his arm in great distress.

"Has your Majesty considered this enough?" protested Pajuka, jumping up in a hurry. "What are you-what are we-going to do?"

"Open a tailor shop," smiled the King, "right here in the Emerald City-the finest tailoring shop in Oz. You see," continued his Majesty, looking a trifle embarrassed, "I've grown awfully fond of tailoring and I think on the whole I'm a better tailor than a King!"

There was a moment's silence after this singular announcement. Then, realizing the geneosity and wisdom of the decision, the whole company burst into thunderous applause.

"Then everything will be the same. Oh, goody goody!" exulted Betsy Bobbin, squeezing Trot's hand under the table. "Isn't he a perfect dear?"

"Instead of a King's double, I'm a tailor's dummy," sighed Humpy resignedly. "Oh well, I don't care, but you'll have to make me another suit."

"I'll make you a tailored suit. I'll make you all suits," promised the King enthusiastically.

"Put plenty of pockets in mine!" puffed Pajuka sinking into his seat with another yawn.

"I'll need a boy in my shop, too," smiled the King, looking down the long table. "How about it, Snip? Will you stay?"

"A good place for a button boy," giggled Scraps, while Snip himself blushed with pleasure and excitement.

"Oh, I'd love to!" cried Snip. "But may I go back to Kimbaloo first and tell Kinda Jolly where I am?"

"Of course, of course," promised the royal tailor, beaming upon everyone. "And now, as we are all tired and sleepy" (the King winked at Pajuka who was trying to hide another monstrous yawn) "I move that we all retire."

"That will be the second time you've retired today," laughed Snip, pushing back his chair and running to open the door for his Majesty. For in spite of his abdication they all felt that Pastoria was a real King.

"Oh, isn't everything turning out splendidly?" sighed Dorothy, pressing the Scarecrow's arm. "The King will be a lot happier as a tailor and every tailor needs a dummy, so that takes care of Humpy. And won't it be fun to have Snip in the Emerald City?"

"I should say!" grinned the Scarecrow, and then, because nobody could stay awake another minute, they bade each other good night and hurried off to bed.

Snip and the Prime Minister shared a sumptuous apartment in the east wing and, hearing a strange noise in the night, Snip sat up in alarm. Pajuka's bed was empty, but standing on one leg over by the window and snoring like a goodfellow (which indeed he was) stood the huge Prime Minister, his head resting peacefully on his shoulder.

"He thinks he's still a goose," smiled Snip, snuggling down under the covers.

CHAPTER 21

The Grand Procession

THE next day there was a grand procession through the streets of the Emerald City, in honor of the long lost King of Oz. The Elegant Elephant led off, the King and Humpy dressed exactly alike riding proudly on his back. Next rode Ozma upon the famous Saw Horse; then came the Cowardly Lion, carrying Dorothy and Snip; then the Hungry Tiger with Betsy and Trot.

Pajuka, astride the Comfortable Camel, was a sight worth seeing, for the huge Prime Minister was splendidly costumed. Besides this, he had a pipe in each hand, taking first a puff from one and then a puff from the other, so that he was almost hidden in clouds of smoke. Sir Hokus, upon the Doubtful Dromedary, bowed politely to his many friends and acquaintances. Scraps and the Scarecrow followed the Knight and after them marched Tik Tok, the Soldier with the Green Whiskers and all the other famous folk from the palace, down to the smallest page. Slowly and majestically they circled the city, returning tired out, but well satisfied, to the cool and fragrant gardens of the palace.

"Now," sighed Ozma, sliding down from the Saw Horse, "there is nothing left to do but punish Mombi. What shall we do with Mombi?"

"Turn her to a cooky, and then I can eat her up without my conscience troubling me," purred the Hungry Tiger, thumping his tail lazily up and down in the grass.

"She'd make an awfully stale cooky," sniffed Scraps, swinging herself expertly up into a tree. "Turn her into a rock and throw her away.

"Why not put her out like I did the other witches?" asked Dorothy, fanning herself with her best crown, which she had worn in honor of the occasion. "Water will finish her once and forever!"

"I believe I will," mused Ozma. "That is, if father thinks it is all right?" The King, with a huge pair of gold specs on his nose, was busily measuring Snip for a suit, and nodded absently at his royal daughter. "Anything you say, my dear," said the royal tailor, writing down the measurements in a little book.

So off ran Sir Hokus and the Scarecrow to carry out the sentence, returning in a few minutes with Mombi's buckled shoes, all that remained of the old Gilliken Witch and her temper. She had been washed out with water, and would never bother anyone in Oz again.

Just as the royal party was trooping into the palace for lunch, a page rushed out to announce a visitor. It was General Whiffenpuff and a loud noise whom he introduced as the Invisible Cook. Travelling night and day, and searching everywhere for Mombi and Snip, he had finally reached the Emerald City and found the famous cook recommended by the Town Laugher of Kimbaloo. His delight at seeing the little button boy safe and sound was only exceeded by his astonishment at Snip's marvelous adventures, but as the cook, for all her invisibility, had a bad habit of treading on the general's toes, he was anxious to return to Kimbaloo and turn her over to Kinda Jolly.

"I'll take you back," volunteered Kabumpo carelessly. "It's on my way home anyhow." The Elegant Elephant was also anxious to be off and acquaint the court of Pumperdink with the important events that had transpired. He wished to display the emerald head-piece Ozma had given him, and dazzle the courtiers with the silver robe bestowed upon him by the kingly tailor of Oz. So after a quick luncheon, a quick exchange of good-byes and good wishes, the pompous old elephant took his departure, carrying on his back brave General Whiffenpuff, the Invisible Cook and the gallant little button boy of Kimbaloo.

"Hurry back!" called the King, waving his silver shears anxiously at Snip. "I need you!"

"Hurry back," called Pajuka, blinking his eyes to keep from crying, "I'll miss you!"

"I will!" promised Snip, nearly crying himself. "I will!" The last thing the little button boy saw was the Prime Minister diving fully dressed into the pond. Pajuka had again forgotten he was no longer a goose.

* * *

If you could peek into the Emerald City this very minute you would see that a splendid tailoring shop has been set up next to the palace-a splendid shop, where the retired King and Snip work happily for part of the day and hold court for the rest. And wherever you find the royal tailor you'll be pretty sure to see his cheerful double.

THE END