

Baum Lyman Frank

The Magic of Oz



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The Magic of Oz

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L. Frank Baum

The Magic of Oz

I Dedicate this Book to the Children of our Soldiers, the Americans and their Allies, with unmeasured Pride and Affection.

L. F. B.

TO MY READERS

Curiously enough, in the events which have taken place in the last few years in our “great outside world,” we may find incidents so marvelous and inspiring that I cannot hope to equal them with stories of The Land of Oz.

However, “The Magic of Oz” is really more strange and unusual than anything I have read or heard about on our side of The Great Sandy Desert which shuts us off from The Land of Oz, even during the past exciting years, so I hope it will appeal to your love of novelty.

A long and confining illness has prevented my answering all the good letters sent me – unless stamps were enclosed – but from now on I hope to be able to give prompt attention to each and every letter with which my readers favor me.

Assuring you that my love for you has never faltered and hoping the Oz Books will continue to give you pleasure as long as I am able to write them, I am

Yours affectionately,
L. FRANK BAUM,
“Royal Historian of Oz.”

Mount Munch

CHAPTER 1

On the east edge of the Land of Oz, in the Munchkin Country, is a big, tall hill called Mount Munch. On one side, the bottom of this hill just touches the Deadly Sandy Desert that separates the Fairyland of Oz from all the rest of the world, but on the other side, the hill touches the beautiful, fertile Country of the Munchkins.

The Munchkin folks, however, merely stand off and look at Mount Munch and know very little about it; for, about a third of the way up, its sides become too steep to climb, and if any people live upon the top of that great towering peak that seems to reach nearly to the skies, the Munchkins are not aware of the fact.

But people *do* live there, just the same. The top of Mount Munch is shaped like a saucer, broad and deep, and in the saucer are fields where grains and vegetables grow, and flocks are fed, and brooks flow and trees bear all sorts of things. There are houses scattered here and there, each having its family of Hyups, as the people call themselves. The Hyups seldom go down the mountain, for the same reason that the Munchkins never climb up: the sides are too steep.

In one of the houses lived a wise old Hyup named Bini Aru, who used to be a clever Sorcerer. But Ozma of Oz, who rules everyone in the Land of Oz, had made a decree that no one should practice magic in her dominions except Glinda the Good and the Wizard of Oz, and when Glinda sent this royal command to the Hyups by means of a strong-winged Eagle, old Bini Aru at once stopped performing magical arts. He destroyed many of his magic powders and tools of magic, and afterward honestly obeyed the law. He had never seen Ozma, but he knew she was his Ruler and must be obeyed.

There was only one thing that grieved him. He had discovered a new and secret method of transformations that was unknown to any other Sorcerer. Glinda the Good did not know it, nor did the little Wizard of Oz, nor Dr. Pipt nor old Mombi, nor anyone else who dealt in magic arts. It was Bini Aru's own secret. By its means, it was the simplest thing in the world to transform anyone into beast, bird or fish, or anything else, and back again, once you knew how to pronounce the mystical word: "**Pyrzqxgl**."

Bini Aru had used this secret many times, but not to cause evil or suffering to others. When he had wandered far from home and was hungry, he would say: "I want to become a cow —**Pyrzqxgl!**" In an instant he would be a cow, and then he would eat grass and satisfy his hunger. All beasts and birds can talk in the Land of Oz, so when the cow was no longer hungry, it would say: "I want to be Bini Aru again: **Pyrzqxgl!**" and the magic word, properly pronounced, would instantly restore him to his proper form.

Now, of course, I would not dare to write down this magic word so plainly if I thought my readers would pronounce it properly and so be able to transform themselves and others, but it is a fact that no one in all the world except Bini Aru, had ever (up to the time this story begins) been able to pronounce "**Pyrzqxgl**" the right way, so I think it is safe to give it to you. It might be well, however, in reading this story aloud, to be careful not to pronounce **Pyrzqxgl** the proper way, and thus avoid all danger of the secret being able to work mischief.

Bini Aru, having discovered the secret of instant transformation, which required no tools or powders or other chemicals or herbs and always worked perfectly, was reluctant to have such a wonderful discovery entirely unknown or lost to all human knowledge. He decided not to use it again, since Ozma had forbidden him to do so, but he reflected that Ozma was a girl and some time might change her mind and allow her subjects to practice magic, in which case Bini Aru could again transform himself and others at will, – unless, of course, he forgot how to pronounce **Pyrzqxgl** in the meantime.

After giving the matter careful thought, he decided to write the word, and how it should be pronounced, in some secret place, so that he could find it after many years, but where no one else could ever find it.

That was a clever idea, but what bothered the old Sorcerer was to find a secret place. He wandered all over the Saucer at the top of Mount Munch, but found no place in which to write the secret word where others might not be likely to stumble upon it. So finally he decided it must be written somewhere in his own house.

Bini Aru had a wife named Mopsi Aru who was famous for making fine huckleberry pies, and he had a son named Kiki Aru who was not famous at all. He was noted as being cross and disagreeable because he was not happy, and he was not happy because he wanted to go down the mountain and visit the big world below and his father would not let him. No one paid any attention to Kiki Aru, because he didn't amount to anything, anyway.

Once a year there was a festival on Mount Munch which all the Hyups attended. It was held in the center of the saucer-shaped country, and the day was given over to feasting and merry-making. The young folks danced and sang songs; the women spread the tables with good things to eat, and the men played on musical instruments and told fairy tales.

Kiki Aru usually went to these festivals with his parents, and then sat sullenly outside the circle and would not dance or sing or even talk to the other young people. So the festival did not make him any happier than other days, and this time he told Bini Aru and Mopsi Aru that he would not go. He would rather stay at home and be unhappy all by himself, he said, and so they gladly let him stay.

But after he was left alone Kiki decided to enter his father's private room, where he was forbidden to go, and see if he could find any of the magic tools Bini Aru used to work with when he practiced sorcery. As he went in Kiki stubbed his toe on one of the floor boards. He searched everywhere but found no trace of his father's magic. All had been destroyed.

Much disappointed, he started to go out again when he stubbed his toe on the same floor board. That set him thinking. Examining the board more closely, Kiki found it had been pried up and then nailed down again in such a manner that it was a little higher than the other boards. But why had his father taken up the board? Had he hidden some of his magic tools underneath the floor?

Kiki got a chisel and pried up the board, but found nothing under it. He was just about to replace the board when it slipped from his hand and turned over, and he saw something written on the underside of it. The light was rather dim, so he took the board to the window and examined it, and found that the writing described exactly how to pronounce the magic word **Pyrzqxgl**, which would transform anyone into anything instantly, and back again when the word was repeated.

Now, at first, Kiki Aru didn't realize what a wonderful secret he had discovered; but he thought it might be of use to him and so he took a piece of paper and made on it an exact copy of the instructions for pronouncing **Pyrzqxgl**. Then he folded the paper and put it in his pocket, and replaced the board in the floor so that no one would suspect it had been removed.

After this Kiki went into the garden and sitting beneath a tree made a careful study of the paper. He had always wanted to get away from Mount Munch and visit the big world – especially the Land of Oz – and the idea now came to him that if he could transform himself into a bird, he could fly to any place he wished to go and fly back again whenever he cared to. It was necessary, however, to learn by heart the way to pronounce the magic word, because a bird would have no way to carry a paper with it, and Kiki would be unable to resume his proper shape if he forgot the word or its pronunciation.

So he studied it a long time, repeating it a hundred times in his mind until he was sure he would not forget it. But to make safety doubly sure he placed the paper in a tin box in a neglected part of the garden and covered the box with small stones.

By this time it was getting late in the day and Kiki wished to attempt his first transformation before his parents returned from the festival. So he stood on the front porch of his home and said:

“I want to become a big, strong bird, like a hawk —**Pyrzqxgl!**” He pronounced it the right way, so in a flash he felt that he was completely changed in form. He flapped his wings, hopped to the porch railing and said: “Caw-oo! Caw-oo!”

Then he laughed and said half aloud: “I suppose that’s the funny sound this sort of a bird makes. But now let me try my wings and see if I’m strong enough to fly across the desert.”

For he had decided to make his first trip to the country outside the Land of Oz. He had stolen this secret of transformation and he knew he had disobeyed the law of Oz by working magic. Perhaps Glinda or the Wizard of Oz would discover him and punish him, so it would be good policy to keep away from Oz altogether.

Slowly Kiki rose into the air, and resting on his broad wings, floated in graceful circles above the saucer-shaped mountain-top. From his height, he could see, far across the burning sands of the Deadly Desert, another country that might be pleasant to explore, so he headed that way, and with strong, steady strokes of his wings, began the long flight.

THE HAWK

CHAPTER 2

Even a hawk has to fly high in order to cross the Deadly Desert, from which poisonous fumes are constantly rising. Kiki Aru felt sick and faint by the time he reached good land again, for he could not quite escape the effects of the poisons. But the fresh air soon restored him and he alighted in a broad table-land which is called Hiland. Just beyond it is a valley known as Loland, and these two countries are ruled by the Gingerbread Man, John Dough, with Chick the Cherub as his Prime Minister. The Hawk merely stopped here long enough to rest, and then he flew north and passed over a fine country called Merryland, which is ruled by a lovely Wax Doll. Then, following the curve of the Desert, he turned north and settled on a tree-top in the Kingdom of Noland.

Kiki was tired by this time, and the sun was now setting, so he decided to remain here till morning. From his tree-top he could see a house near by, which looked very comfortable. A man was milking a cow in the yard and a pleasant-faced woman came to the door and called him to supper.

That made Kiki wonder what sort of food hawks ate. He felt hungry, but didn't know what to eat or where to get it. Also he thought a bed would be more comfortable than a tree-top for sleeping, so he hopped to the ground and said: "I want to become Kiki Aru again —**Pyrzqxgl!**"

Instantly he had resumed his natural shape, and going to the house, he knocked upon the door and asked for some supper.

"Who are you?" asked the man of the house.

"A stranger from the Land of Oz," replied Kiki Aru.

"Then you are welcome," said the man.

Kiki was given a good supper and a good bed, and he behaved very well, although he refused to answer all the questions the good people of Noland asked him. Having escaped from his home and found a way to see the world, the young man was no longer unhappy, and so he was no longer cross and disagreeable. The people thought him a very respectable person and gave him breakfast next morning, after which he started on his way feeling quite contented.

Having walked for an hour or two through the pretty country that is ruled by King Bud, Kiki Aru decided he could travel faster and see more as a bird, so he transformed himself into a white dove and visited the great city of Nole and saw the King's palace and gardens and many other places of interest. Then he flew westward into the Kingdom of Ix, and after a day in Queen Zixi's country went on westward into the Land of Ev. Every place he visited he thought was much more pleasant than the saucer-country of the Hyups, and he decided that when he reached the finest country of all he would settle there and enjoy his future life to the utmost.

In the Land of Ev he resumed his own shape again, for the cities and villages were close together and he could easily go on foot from one to another of them.

Toward evening he came to a good Inn and asked the inn-keeper if he could have food and lodging.

"You can if you have the money to pay," said the man, "otherwise you must go elsewhere."

This surprised Kiki, for in the Land of Oz they do not use money at all, everyone being allowed to take what he wishes without price. He had no money, therefore, and so he turned away to seek hospitality elsewhere. Looking through an open window into one of the rooms of the Inn, as he passed along, he saw an old man counting on a table a big heap of gold pieces, which Kiki thought to be money. One of these would buy him supper and a bed, he reflected, so he transformed himself into a magpie and, flying through the open window, caught up one of the gold pieces in his beak and flew out again before the old man could interfere. Indeed, the old man who was robbed was quite helpless,

for he dared not leave his pile of gold to chase the magpie, and before he could place the gold in a sack and the sack in his pocket the robber bird was out of sight and to seek it would be folly.

Kiki Aru flew to a group of trees and, dropping the gold piece to the ground, resumed his proper shape, and then picked up the money and put it in his pocket.

“You’ll be sorry for this!” exclaimed a small voice just over his head.

Kiki looked up and saw that a sparrow, perched upon a branch, was watching him.

“Sorry for what?” he demanded.

“Oh, I saw the whole thing,” asserted the sparrow. “I saw you look in the window at the gold, and then make yourself into a magpie and rob the poor man, and then I saw you fly here and make the bird into your former shape. That’s magic, and magic is wicked and unlawful; and you stole money, and that’s a still greater crime. You’ll be sorry, some day.”

“I don’t care,” replied Kiki Aru, scowling.

“Aren’t you afraid to be wicked?” asked the sparrow.

“No, I didn’t know I was being wicked,” said Kiki, “but if I was, I’m glad of it. I hate good people. I’ve always wanted to be wicked, but I didn’t know how.”

“Haw, haw, haw!” laughed someone behind him, in a big voice; “that’s the proper spirit, my lad! I’m glad I’ve met you; shake hands.”

The sparrow gave a frightened squeak and flew away.

Two Bad Ones

CHAPTER 3

Kiki turned around and saw a queer old man standing near. He didn't stand straight, for he was crooked. He had a fat body and thin legs and arms. He had a big, round face with bushy, white whiskers that came to a point below his waist, and white hair that came to a point on top of his head. He wore dull-gray clothes that were tight fitting, and his pockets were all bunched out as if stuffed full of something.

"I didn't know you were here," said Kiki.

"I didn't come until after you did," said the queer old man.

"Who are you?" asked Kiki.

"My name's Ruggedo. I used to be the Nome King; but I got kicked out of my country, and now I'm a wanderer."

"What made them kick you out?" inquired the Hyup boy.

"Well, it's the fashion to kick kings nowadays. I was a pretty good King – to myself – but those dreadful Oz people wouldn't let me alone. So I had to abdicate."

"What does that mean?"

"It means to be kicked out. But let's talk about something pleasant. Who are you and where did you come from?"

"I'm called Kiki Aru. I used to live on Mount Munch in the Land of Oz, but now I'm a wanderer like yourself."

The Nome King gave him a shrewd look.

"I heard that bird say that you transformed yourself into a magpie and back again. Is that true?"

Kiki hesitated, but saw no reason to deny it. He felt that it would make him appear more important.

"Well – yes," he said.

"Then you're a wizard?"

"No; I only understand transformations," he admitted.

"Well, that's pretty good magic, anyhow," declared old Ruggedo. "I used to have some very fine magic, myself, but my enemies took it all away from me. Where are you going now?"

"I'm going into the inn, to get some supper and a bed," said Kiki.

"Have you the money to pay for it?" asked the Nome.

"I have one gold piece."

"Which you stole. Very good. And you're glad that you're wicked. Better yet. I like you, young man, and I'll go to the inn with you if you'll promise not to eat eggs for supper."

"Don't you like eggs?" asked Kiki.

"I'm afraid of 'em; they're dangerous!" said Ruggedo, with a shudder.

"All right," agreed Kiki; "I won't ask for eggs."

"Then come along," said the Nome.

When they entered the inn, the landlord scowled at Kiki and said:

"I told you I would not feed you unless you had money."

Kiki showed him the gold piece.

"And how about you?" asked the landlord, turning to Ruggedo. "Have you money?"

"I've something better," answered the old Nome, and taking a bag from one of his pockets he poured from it upon the table a mass of glittering gems – diamonds, rubies and emeralds.

The landlord was very polite to the strangers after that. He served them an excellent supper, and while they ate it, the Hyup boy asked his companion:

“Where did you get so many jewels?”

“Well, I’ll tell you,” answered the Nome. “When those Oz people took my kingdom away from me – just because it was my kingdom and I wanted to run it to suit myself – they said I could take as many precious stones as I could carry. So I had a lot of pockets made in my clothes and loaded them all up. Jewels are fine things to have with you when you travel; you can trade them for anything.”

“Are they better than gold pieces?” asked Kiki.

“The smallest of these jewels is worth a hundred gold pieces such as you stole from the old man.”

“Don’t talk so loud,” begged Kiki, uneasily. “Some one else might hear what you are saying.”

After supper they took a walk together, and the former Nome King said:

“Do you know the Shaggy Man, and the Scarecrow, and the Tin Woodman, and Dorothy, and Ozma and all the other Oz people?”

“No,” replied the boy, “I have never been away from Mount Munch until I flew over the Deadly Desert the other day in the shape of a hawk.”

“Then you’ve never seen the Emerald City of Oz?”

“Never.”

“Well,” said the Nome, “I knew all the Oz people, and you can guess I do not love them. All during my wanderings I have brooded on how I can be revenged on them. Now that I’ve met you I can see a way to conquer the Land of Oz and be King there myself, which is better than being King of the Nomes.”

“How can you do that?” inquired Kiki Aru, wonderingly.

“Never mind how. In the first place, I’ll make a bargain with you. Tell me the secret of how to perform transformations and I will give you a pocketful of jewels, the biggest and finest that I possess.”

“No,” said Kiki, who realized that to share his power with another would be dangerous to himself.

“I’ll give you *two* pocketfuls of jewels,” said the Nome.

“No;” answered Kiki.

“I’ll give you every jewel I possess.”

“No, no, no!” said Kiki, who was beginning to be frightened.

“Then,” said the Nome, with a wicked look at the boy, “I’ll tell the inn-keeper that you stole that gold piece and he will have you put in prison.”

Kiki laughed at the threat.

“Before he can do that,” said he, “I will transform myself into a lion and tear him to pieces, or into a bear and eat him up, or into a fly and fly away where he could not find me.”

“Can you really do such wonderful transformations?” asked the old Nome, looking at him curiously.

“Of course,” declared Kiki. “I can transform you into a stick of wood, in a flash, or into a stone, and leave you here by the roadside.”

The wicked Nome shivered a little when he heard that, but it made him long more than ever to possess the great secret. After a while he said:

“I’ll tell you what I’ll do. If you will help me to conquer Oz and to transform the Oz people, who are my enemies, into sticks or stones, by telling me your secret, I’ll agree to make *you* the Ruler of all Oz, and I will be your Prime Minister and see that your orders are obeyed.”

“I’ll help do that,” said Kiki, “but I won’t tell you my secret.”

The Nome was so furious at this refusal that he jumped up and down with rage and spluttered and choked for a long time before he could control his passion. But the boy was not at all frightened. He laughed at the wicked old Nome, which made him more furious than ever.

“Let’s give up the idea,” he proposed, when Ruggedo had quieted somewhat. “I don’t know the Oz people you mention and so they are not my enemies. If they’ve kicked you out of your kingdom, that’s your affair – not mine.”

“Wouldn’t you like to be king of that splendid fairyland?” asked Ruggedo.

“Yes, I would,” replied Kiki Aru; “but you want to be king yourself, and we would quarrel over it.”

“No,” said the Nome, trying to deceive him. “I don’t care to be king of Oz, come to think it over. I don’t even care to live in that country. What I want first is revenge. If we can conquer Oz, I’ll get enough magic then to conquer my own kingdom of the Nomes, and I’ll go back and live in my underground caverns, which are more home-like than the top of the earth. So here’s my proposition: Help me conquer Oz and get revenge, and help me get the magic away from Glinda and the Wizard, and I’ll let you be King of Oz forever afterward.”

“I’ll think it over,” answered Kiki, and that is all he would say that evening.

In the night when all in the Inn were asleep but himself, old Ruggedo the Nome, rose softly from his couch and went into the room of Kiki Aru the Hyup, and searched everywhere for the magic tool that performed his transformations. Of course, there was no such tool, and although Ruggedo searched in all the boy’s pockets, he found nothing magical whatever. So he went back to his bed and began to doubt that Kiki could perform transformations.

Next morning he said:

“Which way do you travel to-day?”

“I think I shall visit the Rose Kingdom,” answered the boy.

“That is a long journey,” declared the Nome.

“I shall transform myself into a bird,” said Kiki, “and so fly to the Rose Kingdom in an hour.”

“Then transform me, also, into a bird, and I will go with you,” suggested Ruggedo. “But, in that case, let us fly together to the Land of Oz, and see what it looks like.”

Kiki thought this over. Pleasant as were the countries he had visited, he heard everywhere that the Land of Oz was more beautiful and delightful. The Land of Oz was his own country, too, and if there was any possibility of his becoming its King, he must know something about it.

While Kiki the Hyup thought, Ruggedo the Nome was also thinking. This boy possessed a marvelous power, and although very simple in some ways, he was determined not to part with his secret. However, if Ruggedo could get him to transport the wily old Nome to Oz, which he could reach in no other way, he might then induce the boy to follow his advice and enter into the plot for revenge, which he had already planned in his wicked heart.

“There are wizards and magicians in Oz,” remarked Kiki, after a time. “They might discover us, in spite of our transformations.”

“Not if we are careful,” Ruggedo assured him. “Ozma has a Magic Picture, in which she can see whatever she wishes to see; but Ozma will know nothing of our going to Oz, and so she will not command her Magic Picture to show where we are or what we are doing. Glinda the Good has a Great Book called the Book of Records, in which is magically written everything that people do in the Land of Oz, just the instant they do it.”

“Then,” said Kiki, “there is no use our attempting to conquer the country, for Glinda would read in her book all that we do, and as her magic is greater than mine, she would soon put a stop to our plans.”

“I said ‘people,’ didn’t I?” retorted the Nome. “The book doesn’t make a record of what birds do, or beasts. It only tells the doings of people. So, if we fly into the country as birds, Glinda won’t know anything about it.”

“Two birds couldn’t conquer the Land of Oz,” asserted the boy, scornfully.

“No; that’s true,” admitted Ruggedo, and then he rubbed his forehead and stroked his long pointed beard and thought some more.

“Ah, now I have the idea!” he declared. “I suppose you can transform us into beasts as well as birds?”

“Of course.”

“And can you make a bird a beast, and a beast a bird again, without taking a human form in between?”

“Certainly,” said Kiki. “I can transform myself or others into anything that can talk. There’s a magic word that must be spoken in connection with the transformations, and as beasts and birds and dragons and fishes can talk in Oz, we may become any of these we desire to. However, if I transformed myself into a tree, I would always remain a tree, because then I could not utter the magic word to change the transformation.”

“I see; I see,” said Ruggedo, nodding his bushy, white head until the point of his hair waved back and forth like a pendulum. “That fits in with my idea, exactly. Now, listen, and I’ll explain to you my plan. We’ll fly to Oz as birds and settle in one of the thick forests in the Gillikin Country. There you will transform us into powerful beasts, and as Glinda doesn’t keep any track of the doings of beasts we can act without being discovered.”

“But how can two beasts raise an army to conquer the powerful people of Oz?” inquired Kiki.

“That’s easy. But not an army of *people*, mind you. That would be quickly discovered. And while we are in Oz you and I will never resume our human forms until we’ve conquered the country and destroyed Glinda, and Ozma, and the Wizard, and Dorothy, and all the rest, and so have nothing more to fear from them.”

“It is impossible to kill anyone in the Land of Oz,” declared Kiki.

“It isn’t necessary to kill the Oz people,” rejoined Ruggedo.

“I’m afraid I don’t understand you,” objected the boy. “What will happen to the Oz people, and what sort of an army could we get together, except of people?”

“I’ll tell you. The forests of Oz are full of beasts. Some of them, in the far-away places, are savage and cruel, and would gladly follow a leader as savage as themselves. They have never troubled the Oz people much, because they had no leader to urge them on, but we will tell them to help us conquer Oz and as a reward we will transform all the beasts into men and women, and let them live in the houses and enjoy all the good things; and we will transform all the people of Oz into beasts of various sorts, and send them to live in the forests and the jungles. That is a splendid idea, you must admit, and it’s so easy that we won’t have any trouble at all to carry it through to success.”

“Will the beasts consent, do you think?” asked the boy.

“To be sure they will. We can get every beast in Oz on our side – except a few who live in Ozma’s palace, and they won’t count.”

Conspirators

CHAPTER 4

Kiki Aru didn't know much about Oz and didn't know much about the beasts who lived there, but the old Nome's plan seemed to him to be quite reasonable. He had a faint suspicion that Ruggedo meant to get the best of him in some way, and he resolved to keep a close watch on his fellow-conspirator. As long as he kept to himself the secret word of the transformations, Ruggedo would not dare to harm him, and he promised himself that as soon as they had conquered Oz, he would transform the old Nome into a marble statue and keep him in that form forever.

Ruggedo, on his part, decided that he could, by careful watching and listening, surprise the boy's secret, and when he had learned the magic word he would transform Kiki Aru into a bundle of faggots and burn him up and so be rid of him.

This is always the way with wicked people. They cannot be trusted even by one another. Ruggedo thought he was fooling Kiki, and Kiki thought he was fooling Ruggedo; so both were pleased.

"It's a long way across the Desert," remarked the boy, "and the sands are hot and send up poisonous vapors. Let us wait until evening and then fly across in the night when it will be cooler."

The former Nome King agreed to this, and the two spent the rest of that day in talking over their plans. When evening came they paid the inn-keeper and walked out to a little grove of trees that stood near by.

"Remain here for a few minutes and I'll soon be back," said Kiki, and walking swiftly away, he left the Nome standing in the grove. Ruggedo wondered where he had gone, but stood quietly in his place until, all of a sudden, his form changed to that of a great eagle, and he uttered a piercing cry of astonishment and flapped his wings in a sort of panic. At once his eagle cry was answered from beyond the grove, and another eagle, even larger and more powerful than the transformed Ruggedo, came sailing through the trees and alighted beside him.

"Now we are ready for the start," said the voice of Kiki, coming from the eagle.

Ruggedo realized that this time he had been outwitted. He had thought Kiki would utter the magic word in his presence, and so he would learn what it was, but the boy had been too shrewd for that.

As the two eagles mounted high into the air and began their flight across the great Desert that separates the Land of Oz from all the rest of the world, the Nome said:

"When I was king of the Nomes I had a magic way of working transformations that I thought was good, but it could not compare with your secret word. I had to have certain tools and make passes and say a lot of mystic words before I could transform anybody."

"What became of your magic tools?" inquired Kiki.

"The Oz people took them all away from me – that horrid girl, Dorothy, and that terrible fairy, Ozma, the Ruler of Oz – at the time they took away my underground kingdom and kicked me upstairs into the cold, heartless world."

"Why did you let them do that?" asked the boy.

"Well," said Ruggedo, "I couldn't help it. They rolled eggs at me —eggs– dreadful eggs! – and if an egg even touches a Nome, he is ruined for life."

"Is any kind of an egg dangerous to a Nome?"

"Any kind and every kind. An egg is the only thing I'm afraid of."

A Happy Corner of Oz

CHAPTER 5

There is no other country so beautiful as the Land of Oz. There are no other people so happy and contented and prosperous as the Oz people. They have all they desire; they love and admire their beautiful girl Ruler, Ozma of Oz, and they mix work and play so justly that both are delightful and satisfying and no one has any reason to complain. Once in a while something happens in Oz to disturb the people's happiness for a brief time, for so rich and attractive a fairyland is sure to make a few selfish and greedy outsiders envious, and therefore certain evil-doers have treacherously plotted to conquer Oz and enslave its people and destroy its girl Ruler, and so gain the wealth of Oz for themselves. But up to the time when the cruel and crafty Nome, Ruggedo, conspired with Kiki Aru, the Hyup, all such attempts had failed. The Oz people suspected no danger. Life in the world's nicest fairyland was one round of joyous, happy days.

In the center of the Emerald City of Oz, the capital city of Ozma's dominions, is a vast and beautiful garden, surrounded by a wall inlaid with shining emeralds, and in the center of this garden stands Ozma's Royal Palace, the most splendid building ever constructed. From a hundred towers and domes floated the banners of Oz, which included the Ozmies, the Munchkins, the Gillikins, the Winkies and the Quadlings. The banner of the Munchkins is blue, that of the Winkies yellow; the Gillikin banner is purple, and the Quadling's banner is red. The colors of the Emerald City are of course green. Ozma's own banner has a green center, and is divided into four quarters. These quarters are colored blue, purple, yellow and red, indicating that she rules over all the countries of the Land of Oz.

This fairyland is so big, however, that all of it is not yet known to its girl Ruler, and it is said that in some far parts of the country, in forests and mountain fastnesses, in hidden valleys and thick jungles, are people and beasts that know as little about Ozma as she knows of them. Still, these unknown subjects are not nearly so numerous as the known inhabitants of Oz, who occupy all the countries near to the Emerald City. Indeed, I'm sure it will not be long until all parts of the fairyland of Oz are explored and their peoples made acquainted with their Ruler, for in Ozma's palace are several of her friends who are so curious that they are constantly discovering new and extraordinary places and inhabitants.

One of the most frequent discoverers of these hidden places in Oz is a little Kansas girl named Dorothy, who is Ozma's dearest friend and lives in luxurious rooms in the Royal Palace. Dorothy is, indeed, a Princess of Oz, but she does not like to be called a princess, and because she is simple and sweet and does not pretend to be anything but an ordinary little girl, she is called just "Dorothy" by everybody and is the most popular person, next to Ozma, in all the Land of Oz.

One morning Dorothy crossed the hall of the palace and knocked on the door of another girl named Trot, also a guest and friend of Ozma. When told to enter, Dorothy found that Trot had company, an old sailor-man with one wooden leg and one meat leg, who was sitting by the open window puffing smoke from a corn-cob pipe. This sailor-man was named Cap'n Bill, and he had accompanied Trot to the Land of Oz and was her oldest and most faithful comrade and friend. Dorothy liked Cap'n Bill, too, and after she had greeted him, she said to Trot:

"You know, Ozma's birthday is next month, and I've been wondering what I can give her as a birthday present. She's so good to us all that we certainly ought to remember her birthday."

"That's true," agreed Trot. "I've been wondering, too, what I could give Ozma. It's pretty hard to decide, 'cause she's got already all she wants, and as she's a fairy and knows a lot about magic, she could satisfy any wish."

“I know,” returned Dorothy, “but that isn’t the point. It isn’t that Ozma *needs* anything, but that it will please her to know we’ve remembered her birthday. But what shall we give her?”

Trot shook her head in despair.

“I’ve tried to think and I can’t,” she declared.

“It’s the same way with me,” said Dorothy.

“I know one thing that ’ud please her,” remarked Cap’n Bill, turning his round face with its fringe of whiskers toward the two girls and staring at them with his big, light-blue eyes wide open.

“What is it, Cap’n Bill?”

“It’s an Enchanted Flower,” said he. “It’s a pretty plant that stands in a golden flower-pot an’ grows all sorts o’ flowers, one after another. One minute a fine rose buds an’ blooms, an’ then a tulip, an’ next a chrys – chrys – ”

“ – anthemum,” said Dorothy, helping him.

“That’s it; and next a dahlia, an’ then a daffydil, an’ on all through the range o’ posies. Jus’ as soon as one fades away, another comes, of a different sort, an’ the perfume from ’em is mighty snifty, an’ they keeps bloomin’ night and day, year in an’ year out.”

“That’s wonderful!” exclaimed Dorothy. “I think Ozma would like it.”

“But where is the Magic Flower, and how can we get it?” asked Trot.

“Dun’no, zac’ly,” slowly replied Cap’n Bill. “The Glass Cat tol’ me about it only yesterday, an’ said it was in some lonely place up at the nor’east o’ here. The Glass Cat goes travelin’ all around Oz, you know, an’ the little critter sees a lot o’ things no one else does.”

“That’s true,” said Dorothy, thoughtfully. “Northeast of here must be in the Munchkin Country, and perhaps a good way off, so let’s ask the Glass Cat to tell us how to get to the Magic Flower.”

So the two girls, with Cap’n Bill stumping along on his wooden leg after them, went out into the garden, and after some time spent in searching, they found the Glass Cat curled up in the sunshine beside a bush, fast asleep.

The Glass Cat is one of the most curious creatures in all Oz. It was made by a famous magician named Dr. Pipt before Ozma had forbidden her subjects to work magic. Dr. Pipt had made the Glass Cat to catch mice, but the Cat refused to catch mice and was considered more curious than useful.

This astonishing cat was made all of glass and was so clear and transparent that you could see through it as easily as through a window. In the top of its head, however, was a mass of delicate pink balls which looked like jewels but were intended for brains. It had a heart made of a blood-red ruby. The eyes were two large emeralds. But, aside from these colors, all the rest of the animal was of clear glass, and it had a spun-glass tail that was really beautiful.

“Here, wake up,” said Cap’n Bill. “We want to talk to you.”

Slowly the Glass Cat got upon its feet, yawned and then looked at the three who stood before it.

“How dare you disturb me?” it asked in a peevish voice. “You ought to be ashamed of yourselves.”

“Never mind that,” returned the Sailor. “Do you remember tellin’ me yesterday ’bout a Magic Flower in a Gold Pot?”

“Do you think I’m a fool? Look at my brains – you can see ’em work. Of course I remember!” said the cat.

“Well, where can we find it?”

“You can’t. It’s none of your business, anyhow. Go away and let me sleep,” advised the Glass Cat.

“Now, see here,” said Dorothy; “we want the Magic Flower to give to Ozma on her birthday. You’d be glad to please Ozma, wouldn’t you?”

“I’m not sure,” replied the creature. “Why should I want to please anybody?”

“You’ve got a heart, ’cause I can see it inside of you,” said Trot.

“Yes; it’s a pretty heart, and I’m fond of it,” said the cat, twisting around to view its own body. “But it’s made from a ruby, and it’s hard as nails.”

“Aren’t you good for *anything*?” asked Trot.

“Yes, I’m pretty to look at, and that’s more than can be said of you,” retorted the creature.

Trot laughed at this, and Dorothy, who understood the Glass Cat pretty well, said soothingly:

“You are indeed beautiful, and if you can tell Cap’n Bill where to find the Magic Flower, all the people in Oz will praise your cleverness. The Flower will belong to Ozma, but everyone will know the Glass Cat discovered it.”

This was the kind of praise the crystal creature liked.

“Well,” it said, while the pink brains rolled around, “I found the Magic Flower way up in the north of the Munchkin Country where few people live or ever go. There’s a river there that flows through a forest, and in the middle of the river in the middle of the forest there is a small island on which stands the gold pot in which grows the Magic Flower.”

“How did you get to the island?” asked Dorothy. “Glass cats can’t swim.”

“No, but I’m not afraid of water,” was the reply. “I just walked across the river on the bottom.”

“Under the water?” exclaimed Trot.

The cat gave her a scornful look.

“How could I walk *over* the water on the *bottom* of the river? If you were transparent, anyone could see *your* brains were not working. But I’m sure you could never find the place alone. It has always been hidden from the Oz people.”

“But you, with your fine pink brains, could find it again, I s’pose,” remarked Dorothy.

“Yes; and if you want that Magic Flower for Ozma, I’ll go with you and show you the way.”

“That’s lovely of you!” declared Dorothy. “Trot and Cap’n Bill will go with you, for this is to be their birthday present to Ozma. While you’re gone I’ll have to find something else to give her.”

“All right. Come on, then, Cap’n,” said the Glass Cat, starting to move away.

“Wait a minute,” begged Trot. “How long will we be gone?”

“Oh, about a week.”

“Then I’ll put some things in a basket to take with us,” said the girl, and ran into the palace to make her preparations for the journey.

Ozma's Birthday Presents

CHAPTER 6

When Cap'n Bill and Trot and the Glass Cat had started for the hidden island in the far-off river to get the Magic Flower, Dorothy wondered again what she could give Ozma on her birthday. She met the Patchwork Girl and said:

“What are you going to give Ozma for a birthday present?”

“I've written a song for her,” answered the strange Patchwork Girl, who went by the name of “Scraps,” and who, though stuffed with cotton, had a fair assortment of mixed brains. “It's a splendid song and the chorus runs this way:

“I am crazy;
You're a daisy,
Ozma dear;
I'm demented;
You're contented,
Ozma dear;
I am patched and gay and glary;
You're a sweet and lovely fairy;
May your birthdays all be happy,
Ozma dear!”

“How do you like it, Dorothy?” inquired the Patchwork Girl.

“Is it good poetry, Scraps?” asked Dorothy, doubtfully.

“It's as good as any ordinary song,” was the reply. “I have given it a dandy title, too. I shall call the song: ‘When Ozma Has a Birthday, Everybody's Sure to Be Gay, for She Cannot Help the Fact That She Was Born.’”

“That's a pretty long title, Scraps,” said Dorothy.

“That makes it stylish,” replied the Patchwork Girl, turning a somersault and alighting on one stuffed foot. “Now-a-days the titles are sometimes longer than the songs.”

Dorothy left her and walked slowly toward the palace, where she met the Tin Woodman just going up the front steps.

“What are you going to give Ozma on her birthday?” she asked.

“It's a secret, but I'll tell you,” replied the Tin Woodman, who was Emperor of the Winkies. “I am having my people make Ozma a lovely girdle set with beautiful tin nuggets. Each tin nugget will be surrounded by a circle of emeralds, just to set it off to good advantage. The clasp of the girdle will be pure tin! Won't that be fine?”

“I'm sure she'll like it,” said Dorothy. “Do you know what *I* can give her?”

“I haven't the slightest idea, Dorothy. It took me three months to think of my own present for Ozma.”

The girl walked thoughtfully around to the back of the palace, and presently came upon the famous Scarecrow of Oz, who was having two of the palace servants stuff his legs with fresh straw.

“What are you going to give Ozma on her birthday?” asked Dorothy.

“I want to surprise her,” answered the Scarecrow.

“I won't tell,” promised Dorothy.

“Well, I’m having some straw slippers made for her – all straw, mind you, and braided very artistically. Ozma has always admired my straw filling, so I’m sure she’ll be pleased with these lovely straw slippers.”

“Ozma will be pleased with anything her loving friends give her,” said the girl. “What *I’m* worried about, Scarecrow, is what to give Ozma that she hasn’t got already.”

“That’s what worried me, until I thought of the slippers,” said the Scarecrow. “You’ll have to *think*, Dorothy; that’s the only way to get a good idea. If I hadn’t such wonderful brains, I’d never have thought of those straw foot-decorations.”

Dorothy left him and went to her room, where she sat down and tried to think hard. A Pink Kitten was curled up on the window-sill and Dorothy asked her:

“What can I give Ozma for her birthday present?”

“Oh, give her some milk,” replied the Pink Kitten; “that’s the nicest thing I know of.”

A fuzzy little black dog had squatted down at Dorothy’s feet and now looked up at her with intelligent eyes.

“Tell me, Toto,” said the girl; “what would Ozma like best for a birthday present?”

The little black dog wagged his tail.

“Your love,” said he. “Ozma wants to be loved more than anything else.”

“But I already love her, Toto!”

“Then tell her you love her twice as much as you ever did before.”

“That wouldn’t be true,” objected Dorothy, “for I’ve always loved her as much as I could, and, really, Toto, I want to give Ozma some *present*, ’cause everyone else will give her a present.”

“Let me see,” said Toto. “How would it be to give her that useless Pink Kitten?”

“No, Toto; that wouldn’t do.”

“Then six kisses.”

“No; that’s no present.”

“Well, I guess you’ll have to figure it out for yourself, Dorothy,” said the little dog. “To *my* notion you’re more particular than Ozma will be.”

Dorothy decided that if anyone could help her it would be Glinda the Good, the wonderful Sorceress of Oz who was Ozma’s faithful subject and friend. But Glinda’s castle was in the Quadling Country and quite a journey from the Emerald City.

So the little girl went to Ozma and asked permission to use the Wooden Sawhorse and the royal Red Wagon to pay a visit to Glinda, and the girl Ruler kissed Princess Dorothy and graciously granted permission.

The Wooden Sawhorse was one of the most remarkable creatures in Oz. Its body was a small log and its legs were limbs of trees stuck in the body. Its eyes were knots, its mouth was sawed in the end of the log and its ears were two chips. A small branch had been left at the rear end of the log to serve as a tail.

Ozma herself, during one of her early adventures, had brought this wooden horse to life, and so she was much attached to the queer animal and had shod the bottoms of its wooden legs with plates of gold so they would not wear out. The sawhorse was a swift and willing traveler, and though it could talk if need arose, it seldom said anything unless spoken to. When the Sawhorse was harnessed to the Red Wagon there were no reins to guide him because all that was needed was to tell him where to go.

Dorothy now told him to go to Glinda’s Castle and the Sawhorse carried her there with marvelous speed.

“Glinda,” said Dorothy, when she had been greeted by the Sorceress, who was tall and stately, with handsome and dignified features and dressed in a splendid and becoming gown, “what are you going to give Ozma for a birthday present?”

The Sorceress smiled and answered:

“Come into my patio and I will show you.”

So they entered a place that was surrounded by the wings of the great castle but had no roof, and was filled with flowers and fountains and exquisite statuary and many settees and chairs of polished marble or filigree gold. Here there were gathered fifty beautiful young girls, Glinda's handmaids, who had been selected from all parts of the Land of Oz on account of their wit and beauty and sweet dispositions. It was a great honor to be made one of Glinda's handmaidens.

When Dorothy followed the Sorceress into this delightful patio all the fifty girls were busily weaving, and their shuttles were filled with a sparkling green spun glass such as the little girl had never seen before.

"What is it, Glinda?" she asked.

"One of my recent discoveries," explained the Sorceress. "I have found a way to make threads from emeralds, by softening the stones and then spinning them into long, silken strands. With these emerald threads we are weaving cloth to make Ozma a splendid court gown for her birthday. You will notice that the threads have all the beautiful glitter and luster of the emeralds from which they are made, and so Ozma's new dress will be the most magnificent the world has ever seen, and quite fitting for our lovely Ruler of the Fairyland of Oz."

Dorothy's eyes were fairly dazed by the brilliance of the emerald cloth, some of which the girls had already woven.

"I've never seen *anything* so beautiful!" she said, with a sigh. "But tell me, Glinda, what can I give our lovely Ozma on her birthday?"

The good Sorceress considered this question for a long time before she replied. Finally she said:

"Of course there will be a grand feast at the Royal Palace on Ozma's birthday, and all our friends will be present. So I suggest that you make a fine big birthday cake for Ozma, and surround it with candles."

"Oh, just a *cake!*" exclaimed Dorothy, in disappointment.

"Nothing is nicer for a birthday," said the Sorceress.

"How many candles should there be on the cake?" asked the girl.

"Just a row of them," replied Glinda, "for no one knows how old Ozma is, although she appears to us to be just a young girl – as fresh and fair as if she had lived but a few years."

"A cake doesn't seem like much of a present," Dorothy asserted.

"Make it a surprise cake," suggested the Sorceress. "Don't you remember the four and twenty blackbirds that were baked in a pie? Well, you need not use live blackbirds in your cake, but you could have some surprise of a different sort."

"Like what?" questioned Dorothy, eagerly.

"If I told you, it wouldn't be *your* present to Ozma, but *mine*," answered the Sorceress, with a smile. "Think it over, my dear, and I am sure you can originate a surprise that will add greatly to the joy and merriment of Ozma's birthday banquet."

Dorothy thanked her friend and entered the Red Wagon and told the Sawhorse to take her back home to the palace in the Emerald City.

On the way she thought the matter over seriously of making a surprise birthday cake and finally decided what to do.

As soon as she reached home, she went to the Wizard of Oz, who had a room fitted up in one of the high towers of the palace, where he studied magic so as to be able to perform such wizardry as Ozma commanded him to do for the welfare of her subjects.

The Wizard and Dorothy were firm friends and had enjoyed many strange adventures together. He was a little man with a bald head and sharp eyes and a round, jolly face, and because he was neither haughty nor proud he had become a great favorite with the Oz people.

"Wizard," said Dorothy, "I want you to help me fix up a present for Ozma's birthday."

"I'll be glad to do anything for you and for Ozma," he answered. "What's on your mind, Dorothy?"

“I’m going to make a great cake, with frosting and candles, and all that, you know.”

“Very good,” said the Wizard.

“In the center of this cake I’m going to leave a hollow place, with just a roof of the frosting over it,” continued the girl.

“Very good,” repeated the Wizard, nodding his bald head.

“In that hollow place,” said Dorothy, “I want to hide a lot of monkeys about three inches high, and after the cake is placed on the banquet table, I want the monkeys to break through the frosting and dance around on the table-cloth. Then, I want each monkey to cut out a piece of cake and hand it to a guest.”

“Mercy me!” cried the little Wizard, as he chuckled with laughter. “Is that *all* you want, Dorothy?”

“Almost,” said she. “Can you think of anything more the little monkeys can do, Wizard?”

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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