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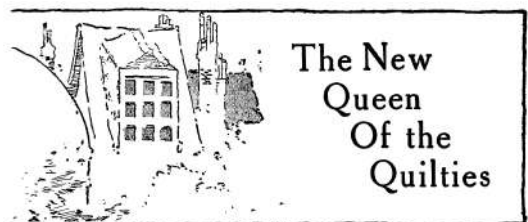
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IMAGINATION OVER KNOWLEDGE

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The Gnome King of Oz: The New Queen Of the Quilties (2/20)

The Emerald City, which Scrapper and Piecer were now entering, is the capital of Oz and lies in the exact center of that merry and magical Kingdom. Oz, as many of you know, is a funny and fascinating fairyland, oblong in shape and surrounded, for protection, by a deadly desert of sand. There are four large countries in Oz; the yellow Winkie Land of the East, the purple Gillikin country of the North, the blue Munchkin country of the West and the red lands of the Quadlings in the South. Each of these four countries is divided into many smaller countries of which Patch is the seven hundred and fifth, but all are subject to one ruler and governed by laws laid down by the Queen of the realm.



The rulers of Oz always lived in the capital, not only because it is so central and convenient, but because it is the most beautiful and enchanting city in the whole fairy world. Its cottages and castle fairly twinkle with emeralds and these precious stones, studding the walls and even the marble walks, give the air a soft glow and shimmer, making gardens greener, fountains more sparkling and everything more glittering and gay.

Ozma, a little girl fairy, is the present ruler of Oz and the wisest and gentlest sovereign the fairy country has ever known. With her in the Emerald City live fifty seven thousand, three hundred and eighteen gay Ozites and nearly a hundred celebrities, for Ozma has invited to her court the most interesting characters from her four fairy kingdoms.

The Scarecrow, a lively fellow stuffed with straw, is perhaps the most famous. He has a palace of his own, but is a frequent visitor at the capital. Then there is the Tin Woodman, who rules over the Winkies and is a splendidly polished gentleman of tin, and Sir Hokus of Pokes, a knight seven centuries old, Jack Pumpkinhead, a singular person carved from wood with a large pumpkin for a head, Tik Tok, a machine man who winds up like a clock and does everything but live, the famous Wizard of Oz and so many more that twenty histories have already been written about their queer doings.

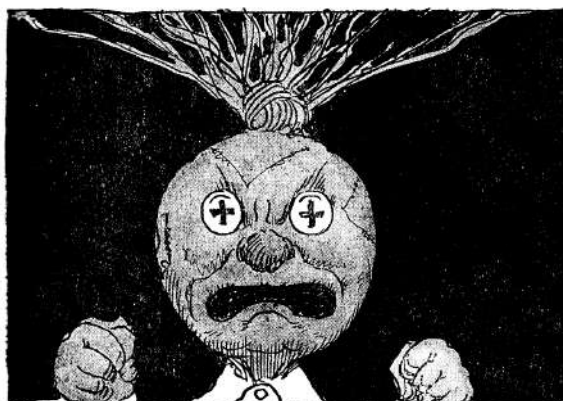


On this late afternoon, as the two bewildered Quilties trod timidly down the streets of the capital, Ozma was busily conferring with

Princess Dorothy about curtains. Dorothy is a little Kansas girl, who was blown to Oz in a cyclone and later was made a Princess and invited to live in the palace. She is Ozma's favorite adviser and not only helps her rule over the turbulent tribes of Oz, but is consulted

about everything, even such small matters as new ribbons for the palace pets or, as now, about castle curtains. Choosing curtains is fun and there were so many colors and fabrics, it took the two girls quite a long time to decide. They had about settled on green taffeta, edged with gold fringe, when a terrified cry came echoing in from the garden.

“What was that?” cried Dorothy, and dropping a roll of taffeta, she rushed to the window. Ozma followed quickly and, in some alarm, the two stared down over the flowered slopes and green terraces. But not a soul was in sight and after waiting for another scream, they concluded that the first was the shout of some mischievous boy and gaily returned to their curtains. Had they looked five minutes sooner, they would have been surprised indeed. Five minutes before Scrapper and Piecer, toiling breathlessly after the Spool of Succession, had run straight into the palace garden. Darting here and there, it had led them to a secluded grape arbor. On a green bench under the arbor sat a most amazing young lady, and as the two Quilties stared at her in perfect astonishment and admiration the golden spool stopped at her feet.



It was the Patchwork Girl, one of the very jolliest of Ozma's subjects. She had been made originally by a wizard's wife out of an old

crazy quilt and neatly stuffed with cotton. Her eyes were silver suspender buttons, her tongue a piece of red velvet and her hair a bunch of yarn that refused to stay down. Margolotte, the wizard's wife, had intended Scraps for a servant, but when the wizard mixed up her brains a double portion of fun and cleverness had got in by mistake. When he brought her to life, Scraps refused to work and ran off to the Emerald City where she has lived ever since, making life lively for everyone and having more fun herself than a cageful of monkeys. Being constructed from a crazy quilt makes her exceedingly reckless and gay and as more than half her conversation is in verse, Scraps is a most amusing and delightful companion. To the weary and already homesick Quilties she seemed a vision of perfect loveliness.

"Superb!" gloated Piecer, throwing both arms round Scrapper's neck in his excitement.

"A beauty!" exulted Scrapper, returning Piecer's embrace with interest. Indeed, so delighted were they at the appearance of their future sovereign that they began to dance up and down and fairly hug one another for joy. A sharp exclamation from the Patchwork Girl made them stop.

"Ragmen apply at the rear!" cried Scraps, pointing imperiously toward the back of the castle.

"Ragmen!" The Quilties exchanged indignant glances. The spool had led them such a chase that their clothes were torn and dusty and the bag over Piecer's shoulder added a convincing touch to the picture. No wonder

Scraps thought them ragmen. Piecer was about to explain, but Scrapper, afraid that this bewitching damsel might escape them, rushed forward impetuously and seized her hand.

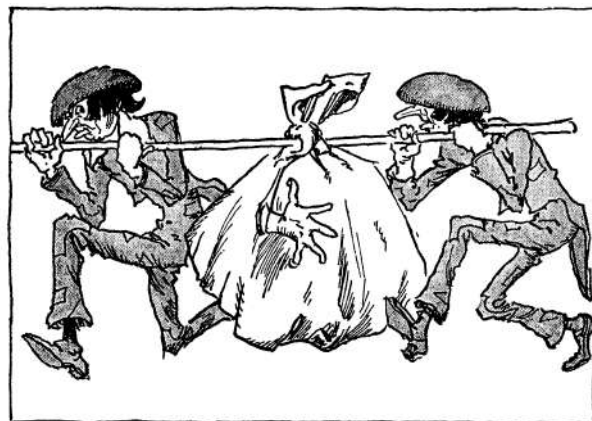


"Scat!" screamed the Patchwork Girl, snatching it angrily away. "What do you take me for?"

"Because we have to," confided the Chief Scrapper mysteriously.

"We take you for what you are, a Queen. Three cheers for the Queen of the Quilties!" wheezed Scrapper, signaling slyly to Piecer. And while the Patchwork Girl fell back, stiff with astonishment, Piecer clapped the bag over her head. Then together the two little Quilties shook her down into the bottom and pulled the string tight. It was the frightened scream of Scraps, as she disappeared into the rag bag that Dorothy and Ozma had heard, but by the time they reached the window, she was out of the garden. Thrusting a sharp stick through the neck of the sack, the Ministers of Patch hoisted it to their shoulders and, with the bag itself swinging violently between them, started on a run for the gates. They would never have succeeded in kidnapping Scraps nor escaping unobserved had it not been for the foot-path. After a short nap it had grown curious about the two strangers it had brought to the city and pattering into the royal garden began to search for them. Usually the Wizard of Oz kept this mischievous piece of property tied up

when not in use, but to-day he had forgotten to do so and, enjoying its holiday, the little foot-path was running perfectly wild. Coming upon Piecer and Scrapper as they dashed headlong over flower beds and borders, it scooped them neatly up and by a short, little known route carried them straight out of the Emerald City.



For a time the Quilties were too shocked to realize what had happened. Then

Scrapper, shaken out of his stupor by a terrible jolt as the foot-path jumped over a boulder, gasped weakly. "Why, it's the same flying path that brought us to the capital!"

"Yes, but where is it flying now?" wailed Piecer, tightening his hold upon the rag bag. Inside Scraps was thrashing around in a frantic effort to escape, her screams and threats somewhat muffled by the collection of pieces already in the bag. "Can't we steer it?" panted the Prime Piecer wildly, "or stop it or something?" Scrapper shook his head violently, then catching sight of a green card tacked on the rustic railing fairly pounced upon it.

"Write directions here," advised the card. There was a pencil attached to the railing by a long cord, so Scrapper seized the pencil and wrote hastily, "Take us to the Kingdom of Patch."

The foot-path jiggled so frightfully while he wrote 'tis a wonder it could understand the directions at all, but as he let the pencil drop, it turned sharply in its tracks and started racing in the opposite direction, tripping and stumbling in its eagerness to get ahead. By the time they reached the Quilty Kingdom, the three travellers were so shaken up and down they tumbled off the path in a perfect heap of exhaustion. Even Scraps, in her imprisoning bag, had nothing at all to say. Not satisfied with shaking them nearly to bits, the foot-path gave Piecer a playful kick with its forty-ninth foot and then, jumping over a green cotton patch, gaily took its departure. Now, ever since morning, the Patch-workers had been anxiously awaiting the return of their ministers and, as the two exhausted sovereign seekers rolled through the gates, a great crowd of Quilties came hurrying to meet them.

"What have you bagged? Who is our ruler? Show us the Imperial Potentate," they cried, clattering their shears and shaking their sewing boxes. Seeing that nothing would satisfy them but an immediate sight of the Queen, Scrapper scrambled wearily to his feet and began fumbling with the strings of the bag.

"Will your Imperial Highness deign to step out?" suggested Scrapper, sticking his head cautiously into the bag.

"Out!" shrilled Scraps, and bouncing up like a Jill in the box, gave Scrapper a resounding smack on the ear.



"You villain ragman
Take me back
How dare you hurl
Me in a sack?"

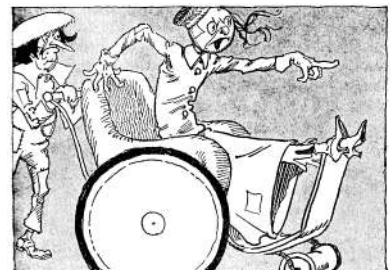
she cried furiously and, whirling upon Piecer, boxed his ears as soundly as she had boxed Scrapper's. At this the delight of the Quilties knew no bounds. They began to cheer and stamp with approval.

"What a fine temper! What a marvelous beauty! She's the Queen for us." And raising their shears they shouted altogether, "Hurrah for the Queen of the Quilties!"

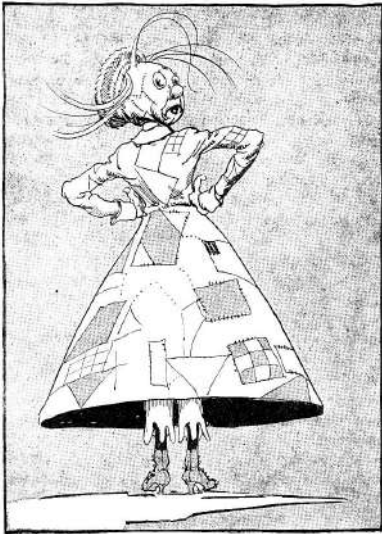
"Try to act like a Queen, can't you?" puffed Scrapper, seizing the agitated Patchwork Girl by the arm.

"You're making a great hit!" whispered Piecer persuasively. "Give me your name, maiden, so I can announce it to your subjects." By this time Scraps had recovered enough to look around and what she saw interested her greatly. The gaudy Quilty Kingdom, with its gay cotton patches, the Quilties themselves, in their oddly patched clothes, seemed as beautiful to Scraps as she seemed to them.

"What do you mean? Am I a Queen?" she demanded, rolling her suspender button eyes from side to side. The Prime Ministers of Patch nodded and, as they did, two Quilties, with a huge patchwork arm chair on wheels, pushed their way through the crowd.



“Quick, now, your name,” begged Piecer. When Scraps, in an excited whisper, imparted the information, he cried in a loud voice: “Hats off to Her Patchesty! Three cheers for Queen Scraps of Patch!”



The cheers were given with a will and, as Piecer grandly handed the Patchwork Girl into the royal rolling chair, the excited Quilties fairly pelted her with patches, tomato pin-cushions and hard spools of cotton.

Luckily Scraps is a stuffed person, with no feeling at all, otherwise she might have been hurt by these flying missiles. As it was, she sat back grandly, bowing now to the left, now to the right and feeling more important than she had ever felt in her whole cotton career. When they reached the patched palace, two Quilty boys were waiting on the steps, one with the coronet and the other with the crown jewels and, amid the further cheers of the populace, Scraps was crowned Queen of the Kingdom and led triumphantly into her castle. The crown was a round sewing basket, the crown jewels a string of old spools, but scarcely noticing the odd character of her royal regalia, Scraps strutted proudly up and down the shabby hall of the palace, rehearsing grand speeches and queenly gestures. As for Scrapper and Piecer—too weary to bother about supper or bed—they immediately

locked all the windows and doors and fell into a heavy slumber on a hall bench.

