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IMAGINATION OVER KNOWLEDGE

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The Magic of Oz: A Happy Corner of Oz (5/23)

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."

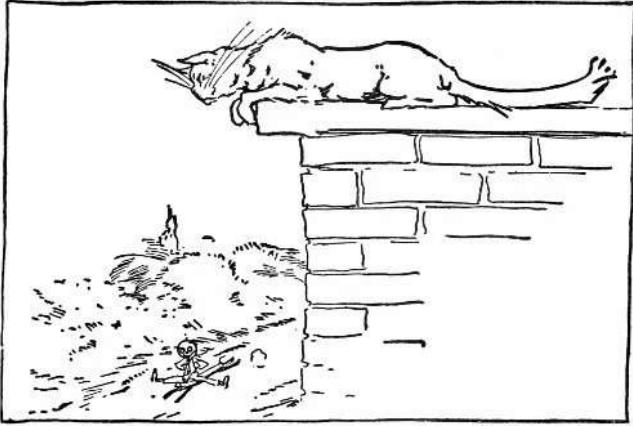
"That's wonderful!" exclaimed Dorothy. "I think Ozma would like it."

"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."

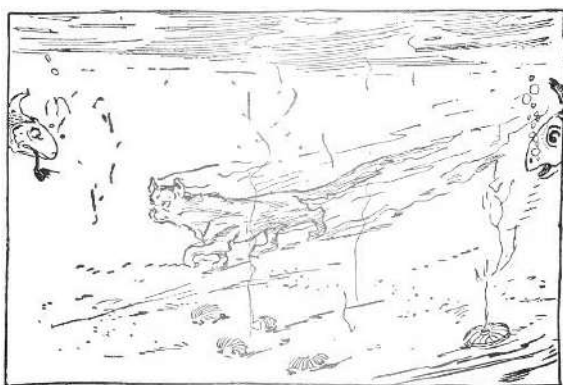
"How did you get to the island?" asked Dorothy. "Glass cats can't swim."

"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.

