

The Cowardly Lion Of Oz – Oz 17

L. Frank Baum

This book is dedicated to My sister Dorothy Thompson Curtiss
and all other lovely Dorothys including Dorothy of Oz

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The Cowardly Lion of Oz

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CHAPTER 1 Mustafa of Mudge

"TAZZYWALLER, I must have another lion," said Mustafa of Mudge, giving his blue whiskers a terrible tweak. "Another lion, Tazzywaller, at once!"

"Your Highness already has nine thousand nine hundred and ninety-nine lions and a half!" said Tazzywaller bowing humbly.

"Oh, that!" interrupted Mustafa impatiently. "Very careless of you, Tazzywaller, to bring me half a lion-the wrong half, too! Monstrous annoying to see the back legs and tail of a lion jumping about in the reservation. Unnatural, I call it."

"But, your Highness will remember that had not a fortunate blow of my scimitar cut off the right half of the lion I would have been devoured, eaten, destroyed!" Tazzywaller's eyes bulged at the unhappy recollection.

"I'd have endeavored to console myself," sniffed Mustafa disagreeably, "and Panapee would make an excellent chamberlain. But this is wasting time. I must have another lion. A lion, I tell you, at once!"

Mustafa's voice rose to a roar. Springing from his throne, he began stamping first one foot, then the other. The round face of poor Tazzywaller grew paler at each stamp. "But there are no more lions in Mudge," he pleaded. "Your Highness must know that. The royal hunters have tracked them all down, and even if there were more, we cannot afford another single lion. I beg of your Highness to consider the nine thousand nine hundred and ninety-nine already eating us out of our sandals. The Mudgers are complaining of the lion tax-" Silence!" screamed Mustafa, jumping into the air so that he could stamp both feet at the same time.

"You're making most of the noise yourself," said Tazzywaller sulkily.

"What is all this arguing about?" demanded a sleepy voice, and through a curtain at the back of the apartment appeared the huge, turbaned head of Mixtuppa, Queen of Mudge.

"Lions! your Majesty," sighed the chief chamberlain, looking uneasily at Mustafa's wife, who was even more unreasonable than her royal husband. "His Highness desires another lion."

"Well, why don't you get him one? You know I can't stand this stamping," wheezed Mixtuppa irritably.

"Neither can I," grumbled Mustafa. "It hurts my royal feet."

"No one asked you to stamp. Why don't you stop it?" sniffed Tazzywaller.

"Will you get me the lion?" asked Mustafa, pausing with foot upraised.

"I would if there were any more, but there are no more lions in Mudge!" wailed Tazzywaller. Down came Mustafa's foot with a terrible stamp.

"Great Gazupp!" screamed the monarch of Mudge. "What kind of a chamberlain are you? I'll appoint Panapee chamberlain in your place and you-you may feed the lions!" he finished furiously.

Mustafa clapped his hands sharply and to the small Mudger who bounced into the room he snapped, "Tell Panapee to appear before me at once." He paid no attention to the pleadings of Tazzywaller, who was bumping his head on the floor, nor to the advice of Mixtuppa, who was wagging her head through the curtain. The next moment Panapee stood before the throne. He was as tall and thin as Tazzywaller was round and fat. His little eyes snapped with glee at sight of the chamberlain rolling about on the floor. As purse bearer he always had to walk back of Tazzywaller in royal processions, and to see his rival in disgrace was an exquisite pleasure to the envious old Mudger.

"Your Excellency sent for me?" asked Panapee bowing deeply.

"Yes," shrilled Mustafa, pushing back his turban and pointing a trembling finger at Tazzywaller.

"He says there are no more lions in Mudge and I, Mustafa, must have another lion."

"Your Highness knows best," murmured Panapee, rolling up his eyes and putting his finger tips together.

"You know as well as I that there are no more lions in Mudge," cried Tazzywaller, springing to his feet and shaking his fist under Panapee's nose.

"There are other countries besides Mudge," said Panapee loftily. "Now I presume your Highness was thinking of an odd, unusual sort of lion; something bigger and better than the kind now fighting amiably in the royal reservation?"

"How well you understand me," sighed Mustafa, sinking back among his cushions. "That's just what I do want, Pannya strange, rare, royal sort of lion; one who will keep the rest in order and add to the honor and dignity of our court."

"I have a book," confided Panapee, placing his finger mysteriously beside his nose, "a book of lions, and if your Highness will but excuse me I will fetch it from my tent."

"Are you going to get a lion out of a book?" asked Mixtuppa sleepily. "How stupid of Tazzywaller not to have thought of that."

Now, while Panapee goes for his book, I must tell you that Mudge is a blue and barbarous country in the southwestern part of the Munchkin country of Oz. It is a hot, dry, desert land and the Mudgers themselves are a short-tempered, long-legged tribe of trouble-makers. They live in blue, striped tents and, if it were not for their bright blue whiskers, you would take them for Arabs, as they wear sweeping white robes and turbans to protect themselves from the heat and desert sands.

In olden Oz times the Mudgers used to descend upon the helpless little countries that surrounded them and carry off everything of value. But Glinda, the good sorceress of Oz, put a stop to that. One night, flying over Mudge in her swan chariot, she had dropped a blue book and it had fallen on the oldest Mudger in the kingdom, hitting him a terrible blow on the nose. It had been a blow to them all, for in gold letters on the first page of the book stood this sentence:

"From this day on, any Mudger leaving the land of Mudge shall lose his head. By order of Ozma, Ruler of all Oz."

There were other warnings in the blue book, but the first had changed the whole history of the country. No Mudger was brave enough to venture out of Mudge after that, so the thieving raids on other countries had stopped instantly, and the Mudgers, deprived of the pleasure of stealing from their neighbors, stole from each other, and were always quarreling among themselves and moving their tents from place to place. The peoples of the surrounding countries would come to the borders of Mudge to bargain for the dates, figs and cocoanuts for which the land was famous, but Mustafa's grandfather, who was then ruler of the desert kingdom, disagreeably decided that since no Mudger might leave Mudge no outsider should enter his country. Warnings were posted on all the borders of Mudge and soon no one came near the horrid little kingdom, so that it went on growing more blue and barbarous all the time, as people are bound to do who have no friends or neighbors.

When Mustafa, who really was not a bad fellow at heart, assumed the throne he tried to divert the minds of his quarrelsome subjects by organizing hunts. There were many lions in the uninhabited parts

of the desert, and for a time hunting lions kept the Mudgers out of mischief. But soon they were quarreling over even that, and the royal hunting expeditions were more in the nature of battles than pleasure excursions.

Mustafa, in despair, confided to Tazzywaller that he much preferred the lions to his subjects. So Tazzywaller had mildly suggested that he keep a few for company. Mustafa, who was terribly bored with his duties as King, was delighted with the idea and issued orders that hereafter all lions should be brought to the royal tents.

At first he had kept two or three in a large enclosed cage in his garden, but as his subjects grew more unmanageable, his affection for lions increased. He insisted upon more and more lions, until, as Tazzywaller had stated, there were nine thousand nine hundred ninety-nine and one-half in the royal collection. Mustafa pretended that he kept these lions to frighten away the enemies of Mudge, and for this purpose he had a large iron enclosure erected all around the kingdom, so that no one could come in or go out without passing through the royal lion reservation. Indeed, when the little Munchkin boys and girls recited their lessons, they always described Mudge as a country entirely surrounded by lions. But this was only an excuse. Mustafa knew well enough that no one dared leave Mudge, and that no one wanted to come there, but it sounded well when the people complained of the lion tax.

Mustafa's lions were a terrible trial to poor Tazzywaller. To keep his position as chief chamberlain of Mudge, he must produce a lion whenever Mustafa demanded one. This was pretty often; By his orders the whole country had been combed for lions and only the week before word had been brought that there was not another lion left in the whole country. Then Tazzywaller himself had gone hunting, and after an exhausting trip had come upon the very last old lion of Mudge. When Tazzywaller tried to capture him, the beast had selfishly tried to devour the fat chamberlain. In protecting himself Tazzywaller cut the old lion in two with his scimitar. Before he could remedy the disaster the front, and best part, of the lion had jumped over the lion enclosure and disappeared.

In the Fairy Kingdom of Oz nothing can really be killed, so that both halves of the lion were quite unhurt and lively, but Mustafa had been very angry when Tazzywaller brought him the half he had managed to catch. It had almost cost him his position.

"To think it was I who suggested lions in the first place," groaned poor Tazzywaller. "Lions! Bah! Mustafa has a taste for lions and lions have a taste for me!"

"That's odd of them," drawled Mixtuppa, rolling her blue eyes at Tazzy. "Poor taste I call it!" "Silence!" exploded Mustafa so sharply that Mixtuppa hastily drew in her head. Mustafa was already regretting his unkindness, but he was too proud to take back his words. Yes, Tazzy would have to feed the lions. He sighed mournfully; but just then Panapee came whirling through the tent flap, a large book under his arm.

"This book," puffed Panapee proudly-but he got no further.

"Give it to me," commanded Mustafa, snatch up the volume from Panapee. Even Tazzywaller edged nearer, and the sleepy head of Mixtuppa was again thrust through the curtain.

"Famous Lions of Oz," read Mustafa, and opened the dusty volume with trembling fingers. But he got no further than the second page, for there was a picture of the most splendid lion he had ever seen in his whole Mudger existence, and underneath, in blue letters, stood the words "This is the famous Cowardly Lion of Oz, King of all forest creatures."

"Cowardly Lion?" gasped Mustafa. "How singular! How rare! Why, he doesn't look cowardly at all."

"If your Highness will but read," exulted Panapee, pointing to the opposite page. Breathlessly Mustafa began.

"The Cowardly Lion is one of the most unusual and celebrated lions in Oz. For many years he ruled over the forest kingdoms, but in the reign of the famous Wizard of Oz the Cowardly Lion was discovered by a little Kansas girl named Dorothy. He became so attached to Dorothy that he accompanied her on her journey to the Emerald City, saving her life many times on the way, and proving so brave, in spite of his cowardice, that he won the love and admiration of all Oz. Since then he has spent most of his time in the capital city, sharing in all the adventures of court celebrities, and of Dorothy, who has been made a Royal Princess.

He has, by his many brave deeds, endeared himself to the whole populace and-

"Panny!" burst out Mustafa, without waiting to read any more, "Panny, that is the lion I want, the Cowardly Lion of Oz!"

"That is the lion he wants!" repeated Mixtuppa, nodding her head approvingly.

"And of course he shall have it," sniffed Tazzywaller, relieved to think he was no longer chamberlain. "Panapee, produce this Cowardly Lion. At once!"

"It will take a little time," began the new chamberlain of Mudge nervously. "An expedition must be fitted out and-

"How about the warning in the book of Mudge?" asked Tazzywaller sarcastically. "Do you suppose anyone is going to risk his head just for the honor of catching this Cowardly Lion?"

"It would be a great honor," said Panapee, looking slyly at his rival, "a very great honor. I was about to suggest that you, dear Tazzywaller, undertake the journey. Even though you were to lose your head, you could still feed the lions of Mudge."

"Me!" screamed Tazzywaller, almost turning a somersault. "Oh, no, my brave Panapee, it would be too great an honor for me. I am only the lion feeder. I must feed them at once!" Tazzywaller started on a run for the door, but Mustafa called him back.

"You used to give me good advice, Tazzywaller," sighed the ruler of Mudge. "Who do you think could catch this Cowardly Lion of Oz?"

"Why not Panapee?" asked the former chamberlain wickedly. "He is a strong, brave man."

"Yes, but what would your Highness do without an adviser?" quavered Panapee in a tremulous tone.

"He could take my advice," drawled Mixtuppa, "and to begin with I'd-" What Mixtuppa was about to advise will never be known, for right here fifteen Mudgers burst into the royal tent. "Lion!" screamed the first. "Lion! Lion.-Lion!" screamed all the others, whirling their scimitars until the confusion was terrible.

"Let me catch him!" cried Tazzywaller, but Panapee clutched at his sleeve.

"No, let me!" squealed Panapee, brushing past him. "I am chief chamberlain of Mudge!"

"Perhaps it is the Cowardly Lion," puffed Mustafa, springing rapturously from his throne, and next minute they had all rolled, run or tumbled out of the tent, screaming in a way to curdle the blood of twenty lions. Under the largest palm tree in the sandy waste Mustafa was pleased to call his garden stood a very lumpy and peculiar-looking lion!

CHAPTER 2

Magic at the Circus

It was raining outside, it was hot and stuffy inside and it was the last day of the circus in Stumptown. All over the big tent people moved about restlessly on the hard seats, and grumbled when sudden splashes of rain came pelting through the tent top. Mothers were thinking anxiously of the wet journey home, young ladies were worrying about their spring bonnets, and even the boys and girls were only applauding half-heartedly as old Billy, the elephant, rang dinner bells in one ring and the Glicko sisters swung dizzily from trapezes in the other. The chief clown ran distractedly around both rings. He stood on his head, he walked on his hands, he leaped over the elephant, he pretended he was a balky donkey. But no one laughed. They didn't even smile at his oldest jokes.

"This is too terrible," gulped the clown, stepping behind a pillar "Not one real laugh the whole afternoon! What's the matter with these folks anyway?" He wiped the perspiration from his forehead, hastily powdered his nose and dashed out again.

It was beginning to thunder now, and the animals in the outside tent set up a dreadful roaring. From looking bored, the people began to look frightened. Something must be done. The worried clown rushed into the center ring and sprang to the back of the big elephant.

"Ladies and gentlemen!" shouted the clown, waving his arms to attract attention. "Ladies and gentlemen, I am about to perform one of the most astonishing and amazing feats ever executed-a trick that has astounded the crowned heads of Europe, Asia and Africa. Ladies and gentlemen-"

People on the back rows, who were already pushing their way toward the exits, paused. A little girl in the twenty-five-cent seats cheered faintly. Thus encouraged, the clown turned a really marvelous somersault and landed on the tip of the elephant's trunk.

"Will some small boy kindly step forward," begged the clown, glancing hurriedly along the front rows. "For this trick I need a small, active boy. Ah, there he is!"

Urging the elephant to the very edge of the ring, the clown snatched a small, red-headed boy from a group of solemn-eyed orphans, who had been brought to the circus for a special treat. The crowd gasped with surprise, and the orphan tried to wriggle out of his coat, but the clown held on firmly.

"One toss of this boy into the air, and he will disappear; a toss of my cap and he will reappear. Watch!" cried the clown, putting his fingers to his lips.

"What are you trying to do?" demanded the ringmaster in a hoarse whisper. "You can't really make him disappear, you know."

The clown realized this, but he was going to make that crowd laughter disappear himself. With a shrill whistle that made even the old elephant prick up his ears, he tossed the orphan to his shoulder and reeled off the first ridiculous rhyme that popped into his head. And this was it:

"Udge! Budge! Go to Mudge! Udger budger, You're a Mudger!"

A roar of delight went up from the crowd, and a roar of terror from the ringmaster, for the orphan had disappeared - disappeared as completely as a punctured balloon!

"Help!" screamed the clown, dancing frantically up and down on the elephant's head. The audience was enchanted and rocking to and fro with merriment.

"That's the best trick I've ever seen," gurgled a fat man, mopping his face. "Look at him pretending to be frightened. Come on now, bring him back, you!"

The clown cried out another verse:

"Udge! Budge! Go to Mudge! Udger budger, I'm a Mudger!"

There was a tearing rip and a clap of thunder. The crowd stared, rubbed its eyes and stared again. No clown, no orphan! Why, this was tremendous! They stamped with glee and shouted their approval. But the ringmaster fell breathlessly against a post, and the owner of the circus, with popping eyes, started on a run for the dressing tent. Not a bit too soon, either, for in a few seconds the crowd stopped laughing as suddenly as it had begun. Umbrellas were brandished furiously, and people shouted at the ringmaster to produce the orphan at once. The ringmaster was shaking in his shiny shoes, but he resolved to save himself if he could. Raising his whip for silence, he announced in his most impressive voice that the best part of the trick was to come-that the clown and orphan were at that minute standing at the circus gate to wave goodbye to the company, one of the most distinguished and delightful companies it had ever been their pleasure to entertain. He clicked his heels together, made a deep bow and the crowd, convinced that he was speaking the truth, began to stream out of the big tent.

Without waiting another second, the ringmaster grasped old Billy by the ear and ran him toward the animal tent. In five minutes the whole circus force was dashing about in the pelting rain, dragging out cages, prodding the elephants, tugging at the big horses, pulling down the tents.

"Something terrible has happened; we've got to move out of here," chattered the owner of the show, rushing from group to group. By the time the indignant old gentleman who had brought the orphans to the circus had been to the gate and back, the first of the heavy circus wagons was already rattling over the hill. The few workmen, hastening the last bits of loading, shook their heads dully when he demanded the orphan and, after threatening and stamping in vain, the distracted old gentleman ran off to fetch the police, with the thirty-nine other orphans splashing delightedly behind him.

Police! What could police do against magic? How did the clown know that the rhyme that had popped into his head was an old Oz formula? It had carried off the orphan like a skyrocket, and when the clown had frantically repeated the magic words, he too had been snatched into the air, hurled through the tent top, and flung down beside the frightened little boy in the strangest land he had ever seen. Fortunately they had fallen on a soft dune of sand, and around them for miles and miles stretched a flat

and silvery desert.

CHAPTER 3 At the Court of Mudge

NEITHER the clown nor the boy spoke for several minutes. To tell the truth, they were breathless. Then the clown sat up and looked doubtfully at the orphan.

"Well, here we are," he said, winking more from force of habit than because he felt particularly jolly.

"Yes, sir!" gulped the orphan, swallowing hard.

"Now don't call me sir," begged the clown, making conversation to gain time. "Don't call me sir because I worked in a circus. My name is Notta-Notta Bit More. I was the last of twelve children, and my mother and father could not agree on a name for me. Every time my mother said, 'Call him Augustus Elmer More,' my father said, 'not a bit of it.' After while, being a clown himself and a joker by trade, he began calling me 'Notta Bit More' and Notta I've been ever since." The clown winked again. "Call me Notta, won't you?"

"Yes, sir," replied the orphan, swallowing again and trying not to cry. Seeing this, Notta turned a double somersault and stood on his head.

"And what is your name?" he asked, waving his legs cheerfully. "Bobbie Downs," sniffed the orphan, with another swallow.

"How did you get it?" The clown dropped down beside the little boy.

"I think it came with me, sir," said Bobbie faintly.

"Well, if you don't mind, we'll change it to Bob Up-for that's what we've done-and Bob Up sounds more lively than Bobbie Downs, don't you think?"

While Notta was talking he was glancing anxiously around him. "Bob," he said finally, "I think we've fallen in with another circus. See, there are tents, and I hear lions roaring." "So do I," said Bobbie beginning to look more interested than frightened.

"Yes, it's either a circus or a sea shore without any sea," continued the clown, running his fingers through the sand. "But anyway, here I am and here you are, and so long as you are here we'll bob up together. Let's go on to the main tent and see the show."

Bobbie stood up and shook the water from his cap. They were both dripping wet from the storm they had passed through, but the sun and wind of this queer desert country soon dried them off and, conversing almost cheerfully, they trudged through the deep sand toward a large blue, striped tent.

"I've done a heap of traveling in my time," confided Notta, "but never in just this way. I've run into some strange places and walked into others; but this is the first time I ever talked myself into a country. There we were in a circus, quiet and natural like, then that rhyme pops into my head. I say it and

off we go like a couple of skyrocketers. We were just talked into this country, Bob, my boy, and a mighty tricky business I call it. But never mind, we'll just follow the rules anyway.

"What rules?" asked Bob, looking curiously at some tall palm trees, waving in the distance. He had never supposed palm trees existed outside of geography books.

"Why," explained Notta, "just four simple little rules I made up to use in case of danger or trouble. First," he pulled out his little finger, "first I disguise myself. If that fails, I'm extremely polite. If politeness doesn't do, I tell a joke. If the joke fails, I shout something no one can understand and run like sixty. So don't you worry, Bob; stick to me and run when I run and everything will turn out right. Do you know what makes me so fat?"

Bob shook his head.

"Disguises!" whispered Notta triumphantly. "I use them for padding. Mighty handy when I tumble about. Yes, sir, in here." Notta fondly patted his bulging Suit. "In here I have six marvelous disguises ready to put on at a moment's notice, and in here," Notta tapped his powdery forehead, "in here, I've sixty different jokes, and lots of things I don't understand myself, so you see we are prepared for everything." "Yes, sir," said Bobbie solemnly, for he was a very solemn little boy. Living in an orphan asylum had made him that way and, as for adventures, he had never had an adventure in his life. There were lessons and meals and punishments, and once in a while a fight among the older boys, but no one in that big, busy home had time to talk to Bobbie Downs, nor answer his questions. So Bobbie had grown quieter and more solemn each year of the seven he had spent in the dull gray asylum.

Notta looked at the little boy curiously as he trudged along beside him. The kindly clown decided that he was going to like Bob Up, and right there he decided that Bob Up was going to have a little fun. "I'll bet he's never laughed out loud in his whole life," thought the clown to himself, and began running over in his head the funniest jokes that he knew. He had just determined on the one about the pig and the pound of bacon, when an ear splitting screech knocked all thought of joking out of his mind. A huge figure, with bristling blue whiskers, had stepped out from behind a palm tree, taken one look at the two strangers and then disappeared in the direction of the blue tent, shouting at the top of his lungs.

"Is it Blue Beard?" quavered Bob, clutching Notta.

"Bob," said the clown, swallowing hard, "I don't know, but we'll just try rule one." Fumbling in the bosom of his suit he dragged out a brown bundle, and before the little boy could wink had stepped into it and dropped on all fours.

"I'm a lion," panted Notta, "and if I roar loudly enough I may frighten them off. Stick close to me, Bob, and try to remember the rules. If I run, you run-understand?"

"Yes, sir!" gasped Bob, his eyes as round as cookies, for Notta's disguise was so real that he was almost afraid himself. Scarcely had Notta cleared his throat for a growl than a white robed company burst out of the blue tent, and descended upon them in a whirl of sand and scimitars. Bob was as brave as any boy, but his retired life in an orphan asylum had not prepared him for anything like this. Tears started to his eyes. With a scream, of fright, he grasped Notta's woolly mane.

"You'd better stop crying and get ready to run," whispered the clown nervously and finished his sentence with such a roar that Bob jumped quite three feet. But the wild white company kept right on coming and, before Notta could get another growl going, a net was thrown over his head, a dozen of the blue whiskered villains were upon him and next instant he was rolling over and over in the sandy road.

Bob had shut his eyes tight, expecting to be snatched himself, but when nothing happened he opened them and saw with a little gasp that they were hustling Notta, with pricks and prods, towards the billowing blue tent. This was Bob's first adventure and he might have run away, but something inside of him, that he hadn't known about, kept him there. Right in that moment, and all of a sudden, Bob discovered that he was fonder of this clown whom he had known only a few moments than of anyone he had ever known before. He felt that if something terrible was going to happen to Notta it might as well happen to him too.

"Bob Up," the clown had called him. Well, bob up he would. With trembling legs, he ran after the shouting company, and managed to squeeze into the royal tent unnoticed, behind the broad back of Tazzywaller. For as you have all guessed long before now, it was to Mudge that Notta had transported himself and the little boy.

Notta's disguise, though somewhat askew, still held together and he was growling terribly to keep up his courage, at the same time looking anxiously around for Bob. His lion head had been knocked sideways, so that he could only see out of one eye, but what he managed to see with one eye was enough to make him quake with terror. The Mudgers were shouting and hopping about in front of a large blue throne, pointing at him with their flashing scimitars.

Then a tall, particularly thin fellow seized him by the ear. It was Panapee.

"Lion," cried Panapee haughtily, "this is your new master, Mustafa of Mudge. Your Highness, here is the lion you were just wishing for!"

"An odd looking beast," puffed the ruler of Mudge, tugging at his mustache.

"An awful looking creature I call it," sniffed Tazzywaller, who was jealous to think another lion really had been captured after he said there were no more.

"Maybe it's the Cowardly Lion," mused Mustafa. "I see that his knees are trembling. Are you the Cowardly Lion?" he demanded, pointing his scimitar at poor Notta. The clown roared dismally, to prove he was no coward. How was he to know that in the land of Oz all animals can and are expected to talk? Why, he did not even know he was in Oz, and in the hands of the Mudgers.

"He refuses to answer," said Mustafa gloomily. "Well, a dumb lion is better than no lion at all. Take him away, Panny, and lock him up with the other lions. I hope he's a good fighter. Let me see, that makes ten thousand for you to feed, Tazzywaller, if the others don't chew this one up. He rubbed his hands joyfully together. "I'll come out later on and see how they take to him. But I am not going to be satisfied until I have the Cowardly Lion, Panny. This lion is a cowardly lion but not the Cowardly Lion. Take him away!"

Mustafa picked up the lion book and, waving Notta out of the tent, fell to looking at the picture of the Cowardly Lion of Oz.

All during this conversation Notta's hair had been prickling under his mane. Ten thousand lions! Sizzling sawdust! Better face these wild-looking men than that. Rule one had failed, it was time to try rule two.

"Come on," growled the Mudger at his head and gave the rope around his neck a sharp tug. But before the clown had a chance to move or speak, there was a shrill scream, and out rushed Bob Up,

almost upsetting old Tazzywaller. He flung both arms around the trembling lion.

"You shan't take him away," cried the little boy stormily. "It isn't a lion. It's Notta!"

"Notta?" roared Mustafa, lurching forward and looking at Bobbie with astonishment.

"Not a lion," cried the clown, rising on his hind legs and hastily removing his lion head.

CHAPTER 4 Mustafa's Mandate

THERE was a moment of absolute silence following Notta's disclosure. With his lion body and clown head he presented an amazing and ridiculous appearance. Nothing like this had ever been seen in Mudge, and the Mudgers simply gaped with astonishment.

"Steady now, Bob," whispered the clown, putting his lion paw around the little boy. "All we have to do is to be polite-rule two, you know!"

Mustafa was the first to recover. "Not a lion!" cried the Monarch of Mudge hoarsely. "Why, how dare you disappoint me like this? Did you hear that, Tazzywaller, Panny, Mixtuppa-all of you? He says he's not a lion." A sob of rage choked Mustafa's voice.

"I apologize for not being a lion," said Notta, in a polite, slightly shaky voice. "Ten thousand pardons!"

"Ten thousand puddings!" screamed Mustafa furiously.

"Puddings by all means, if your Highness prefers them," corrected Notta hastily. "I told you there were no more lions in Mudge," wheezed Tazzywaller with a triumphant glance

at Panapee. "I knew it wasn't a lion all along." "Well, what is it then?" asked Mustafa angrily. "The little fellow's a boy of some kind, but this other?" He waved scornfully at the poor clown.

"A wizard, your Highness?" hissed Panapee. "A wizard, that's what he is.

"Now don't call me names," begged Notta, extending the front paws of his disguise. "I'm Notta."

"Not a wizard, I suppose," said Tazzywaller scornfully.

"Why don't you ask him how he got here?" sighed Mixtuppa, reasonably enough. Notta stared curiously at the large head of Mixtuppa, wagging through the blue curtain. Perhaps here was someone who would understand politeness.

"Madam, your Highness, gracious and lovely lady," began the clown with a deep bow, "we fell into this charming country through no fault of our own.

"Well, it wasn't our fault; we have no faults here," snapped Mustafa ungraciously. "How did

you get past the lion enclosure?" demanded Panapee. "How do you explain this being a lion one minute and a creature of another sort the next?"

"Well, there is something very queer about it," admitted Notta, rubbing his forehead in a puzzled way. "One minute Bob and I were in a circus doing a bit of a trick and-

"I knew it was a trick," exclaimed Panapee triumphantly. "He admits it!"

"Silence!" cried Mustafa, who was beginning to enjoy the recital. "You were in a circus? Tazzywaller, what is a circus?"

"It's a show," explained Notta hastily, for he could tell by the puzzled faces of the Mudgers that they had never heard of such a thing. "And we were in it. I put Bob on my shoulder and shouted a silly rhyme, and in a flash he is gone. I shout it again and I'm gone too!"

"Gone where?" asked Mustafa, rubbing his chin.

"To here," replied Notta, gazing about him uneasily. "Funny how a little verse could carry us so far." He recited:

"Udge! Budge! Go to Mudge! Udger budger, I'm a Mudger!"

No sooner had he done so than Mustafa sprang into the air and all the Mudgers began roaring with fright and fury.

"He's discovered the secret of Mudge," shrilled Mustafa, pulling out a handful of his whiskers.

"How dare you use our own privately patented, particular, magic transformation formula? Now you'll be wishing all sorts of people into the country!"

"He's a wizard!" screamed Panapee. "I told you he was a wizard! Twist his tail; off with his head; throw him to the lions!"

"Wait, let me explain," pleaded the clown, but his voice was drowned in the angry hubbub. Then all at once a gong at the back of the tent rang thunderously. Mustafa, who had already seized the tail of Notta's disguise, paused. So did the others. On a platform at the other end of the tent stood Tazzywaller, thumping the gong with all his might. The noise was so terrible that even Notta and Bob, frightened though they were, had to cover their ears. Not until Mustafa ran to the little platform and commanded Tazzywaller to stop, did the awful clangor cease.

"What do you mean by this impertinence?" panted Mustafa, seizing Tazzy's arm.

"It was the only way I could get your attention," said Tazzywaller calmly. "I have something important to say. About lions," he finished meaningly.

"Well, what is it?" puffed Mustafa eagerly. "Be quiet!" he called to the Mudgers who were again closing in on Notta and Bob.

"That person," cried Tazzywaller, with a wave toward Notta, "is undoubtedly a- wizard. Instead of snatching off his head, which will be of no use to us, even as an ornament, why not compel him to serve us? He is a wizard, or he would not be in Mudge. Well then, let him go to the Emerald City and

bring back the Cowardly Lion!"

Mustafa stared at his former chamberlain in amazed admiration, then flinging both arms about his neck, hugged him almost to suffocation. Next instant he had clapped his hands and issued a dozen orders to as many little servitors. At the first the shouting Mudgers retired backward from the tent, at the second Panapee also retired, leaving Bob and Notta alone with Tazzy and their Majesties. Outside, the marching and countermarching of the blue guard could be heard as they surrounded the royal tent.

"The rules aren't working at all well, Bob," breathed Notta anxiously. Bob said nothing.. He just clutched the clown's hand a little tighter and stared at Mustafa in open-eyed wonder.

"Now then," chuckled the monarch of Mudge, "now then, my handsome wizard, what do you call yourself?"

"Notta," began the clown, resolved to be polite as long as possible, "Notta Bit More."

"Notta!" coughed Mustafa, opening his eyes wide. That doesn't sound like a name. It sounds like-

"A joke," put in the clown, with one of his broad smiles, "a little joke on me. You see it is meant to be funny."

"Well, it doesn't amuse me at all." Mustafa stared solemnly into the clown's face. "Why are you so white? And why is his hair," Mustafa jerked his thumb at Bob-"so red?"

"For the same reason that your Majesty's whiskers are blue," replied Notta promptly. Mustafa did not quite like this answer.

"Your business?" he inquired next. "I suppose you deny being a wizard?"

"Oh, absolutely!" said Notta. "But my business, if your Majesty insists, is fun. I make people laugh and thus prolong their lives."

"A funny business," sniffed Mustafa, with a puzzled look at Tazzywaller. "Well, you will have to make me laugh to prolong your life, and the only thing that makes me laugh is lions!"

"Lions!" Notta wrinkled up his forehead. "I'm afraid lions are not in my line at all. You see I didn't work in that part of the show."

"You pretended to be a lion," interrupted Mustafa sternly, "and you have proved yourself a wizard. So unless you can capture the Cowardly Lion of Oz and bring him back to Mudge, you shall be thrown into the lion reservation, whereby nine thousand nine hundred and ninety-nine lions will tear you to bits. Do you agree?"

"Tear me to bits!" gulped the clown. "My father often said I'd go to the dogs, but he never dreamed I'd be thrown to the lions. Say, is this Cowardly Lion very fierce?" Instead of answering, Mustafa handed him Panapee's lion book, saying, "You may read that while I make preparations for your journey.

Smiling almost pleasantly, the Monarch of Mudge linked his arm through Tazzywaller's and disappeared behind the blue curtain at the back of the tent. Mixtuppa also drew in her head and Bob Up

and Notta were left alone.

"Isn't it time to run?" asked the little boy anxiously. He had never in his whole life heard so much about lions. But Notta put his fingers to his lips and shook his head.

"No use," whispered the clown. "The tent's surrounded. We must pretend, my boy pretend we are going to hunt this Cowardly Lion. Then, once out of the country, we'll take the first train home." He sat down on a huge cushion and began turning the pages of the lion book, Bob Up looking curiously over his shoulder. They were both quite interested in a description of the Cowardly Lion and Princess Dorothy, when Mustafa came whirling back. He was followed by a small Mudger servant, with three white packets upon his head.

"Here," said Mustafa, with a wave at the packets, "are provisions for three days. Travel straight north until you reach a yellow brick road and follow that road till you come to the Emerald City. There you will find the Cowardly Lion."

"But, see here," began Notta, who had been doing some quick thinking, "why does not your Majesty transport this lion to Mudge by the magic verse?"

"For a wizard," sniffed Mustafa, "you are astonishingly stupid. That verse only transports people, and one must touch the person."

"Well then, why not send some of your valiant tribesmen to capture him? I, I am a stranger here and have never captured a lion in my life."

"Because it is written in the book of Mudge that any Mudger leaving his country will lose his head," droned Mixtuppa, thrusting her turban through the curtain. "And if you take my advice you will go at once. All this arguing keeps me awake, and when I'm awake I lose my temper, and when I lose my temper other folks lose their heads, and when that--"

"I'll go," sighed Notta, seeing that no sense at all was to be had from this ridiculous pair. He stepped out of his lion disguise and, rolling it up into a small bundle, thrust it into his trouser leg. Next he slung the three packets around his neck and, taking Bob's hand, declared himself ready to go.

Rubbing his hands gleefully, Mustafa led them out of the royal tent, through a double line of the Mudger Guard, to the great iron enclosure that surrounded his kingdom. The lions were snarling and quarreling among themselves, but as soon as Mustafa came in sight they began calling him names and screaming for their dinner.

"Be quiet, my little pets," chuckled the Monarch of Mudge good-naturedly. "This is not dinner, only a silly wizard."

"Give us the boy, then," roared the largest of the lions, licking his chops. "Give us the boy," roared all the other lions immediately. Notta and Bob Up stared at Mustafa's pets in horror and disbelief, for neither had in their lives ever heard a lion talk before. Bob, especially, was terribly dismayed by the personal nature of their conversation. But, while they were still trembling, two heavy doors were slipped through the bars, about five feet apart, making a safe and narrow passageway through the enclosure. The gates on the inside and outside of the enclosure were unlocked and Mustafa waved imperiously for them to go.

This Notta and Bob lost no time in doing.

"Remember," called Mustafa warningly, as they scurried through, "if you run away instead of hunting for the Cowardly Lion, I shall know of it. When a messenger disobeys me, my magic ring turns black. If it turns black I shall know you are deceiving me, and in that case Mustafa held up his thumb so that Notta could see his ring" in that case I shall take it off, and if I take it off you will both turn as blue as my whiskers and find yourselves unable to move until you decide to do as I have commanded. Goodbye, my chalk-faced wizard, a pleasant journey and a swift return!"

Notta was too shocked and astounded to answer. Grasping Bob Up more firmly than before, he rushed out the iron gate and off through a field of blue daisies, until the dreadful roaring of the lions of Mudge could no longer be heard.

"And this," puffed the clown at last, sinking down under a great tree, "this is what comes of trying to be funny. Never try to be funny, my boy."

"No, sir," answered Bob, staring anxiously over his shoulder to see whether any of Mustafa's lions had followed them.

CHAPTER 5

Two Cowardly Lion Hunters

FOR a time Notta and Bob Up sat quietly under the tree, each busy with his own thoughts. The clown was repeating to himself Mustafa's warning, and trying to recall some mention of such a country as Mudge in the geographies he had studied. The little boy was thinking that at this time yesterday he was calmly eating oatmeal and apple sauce, with nothing more exciting ahead than lessons and bed. Perhaps he was asleep, and dreaming about lions and blue whiskered Mudgers. He touched Notta experimentally, to see if he would disappear or turn suddenly to the harsh-voiced matron of the orphan asylum. But the clown only turned a neat somersault, walked a few paces on his hands and sat down again.

"Bob," asked the clown, tilting his cap forward so he could scratch his ear, "do I look like a lion hunter?"

Bob Up shook his head slowly and almost laughed. Something inside tickled tremendously, but he remembered, just in time, that laughing was against the rules of the orphan home, so he swallowed instead.

"We're both lion hunters," observed the clown reflectively, "and that being the case we had better start hunting at once, for it would never do for the lions to find us first. It's like a game of hide-and-seek, Bob. So long as we are hunting him, this Cowardly Lion is it. But if we stop hunting, then we're it. In a game of hide-and-seek with a lion, it's your hide or his. Being it, means being et, hide-and-seek and all!"

Notta glanced slyly at Bob out of the corner of his eye to see whether he were going to smile. Bob was looking uncertainly at the forest, stretching so darkly ahead, and thinking he would just as soon not play this game of hide-and-seek at all. But as Notta had already started toward the forest, there was

nothing for him to do but follow. The short, spring afternoon was drawing to a close and a round silver moon showed faintly over the tree tops.

"Things might be a lot better, and again they might be a lot worse," mused Notta, as they walked along under the trees. "Why, if you were in the home, you would probably be eating corn meal mush for supper and-"

"What are we going to have for supper, Notta?" asked Bob, looking up at the clown inquiringly. "Well, hurrah!" shouted the clown, turning a rapid cartwheel. "You're getting on, my lad; called me Notta as natural as a brother. As to supper, that depends on Mustafa. Let's see what the old rascal has given us."

On a flat stump that happened to be near, Notta opened one of the packets and set out a regular feast. There were dozens of small meat sandwiches, there were ripe figs, a jar of honey, and a little jug full of blue tea, which they found most refreshing. After they had feasted, Notta carefully packed up the rest and, feeling more cheerful, the two cowardly lion hunters stepped along through the forest.

"I can't make out where we are, at all," said the clown presently, "but in a country where lions talk, and verses fling one about, it's safer to obey orders, don't you think so, Bob Up, my boy? So long as we travel towards this Emerald City we are obeying orders and are safe from Mustafa's ring. When we get there is time enough to worry about the Cowardly Lion. Now take an Emerald City, Bob; did you ever hear of such a place? Why, it's as strange as blue whiskers and cowardly lions. Everything's strange. In fact, I think we've fallen into one of these fairy tales. I always had a kind of notion they were true!"

"But the Cowardly Lion liked Dorothy," burst out Bob quite unexpectedly, "so maybe he will like us." He had been turning slowly over in his mind the few facts he had managed to read in the lion book.

"Why, bless my heart!" cried the clown, looking down at Bob admiringly, "so he did, and furthermore, didn't that book say Dorothy was from Kansas?"

Bob Up nodded solemnly.

"Well, then everything's clear as candy!"

Notta turned a somersault from pure relief. "We'll go straight to this Emerald City and tell our troubles to Dorothy, and when she learns that we are from the United States, surely she will help us to get back, and if we could take a couple of talking lions along our fortune would be made. Why, even Barnum and Bailey never showed a talking lion."

Notta was so enthusiastic by this time that he fairly bounced along. But Bob was growing sleepy. He found it harder and harder to keep pace with Notta's long legs, and finally fell sprawling over the roots of a large tree. Notta had him up in a minute.

"Lights out?" chuckled the clown, touching Bob's eyelids gently. "Well, then, let's go to bed. It's too dark to go on, anyway.

"I don't see any beds," sighed Bob, leaning wearily against the clown's knee.

"Neither do I," admitted the clown, "but we'll just pretend we're flowers, and sleep on the ground." In a minute the clown had raked a pile of leaves together under the tree and placed Bob

carefully in the center.

"Are there any bears in this wood?" asked Bob, looking around doubtfully. It was quite dark now, and the moonlight sifting through the leaves made queer shapes out of all the shadows. "This isn't a bear forest," said Notta positively. "I think it's a fairy forest, Bob, and that reminds me of a song I used to know."

Reaching over, Notta pulled the little boy into his big, comfortable lap, and with a twinkle in his eyes he put his back against the tree and began to sing:

"Oh the moon's a balloon On a silvery string, And the Sandman holds on to it tight! 'Tis a ticklish task-What would happen, I ask, If he let it fly off some fine night?"

"But he knows that there are Seven points to a star, That might puncture the moon; and a steeple Would finish it quite! How we'd miss it at night, For the moon means so much to some people!"

There was another verse to the song, and Bob, leaning drowsily against Notta's chest, thought he had never heard anything so perfectly beautiful. He had never sat on a real lap before, nor had a song sung especially for him. So the little boy snuggled down contentedly, his eyes straying to the moon, just visible above the tree tops. Why, there was a string on it, a bright silver string, and a little, old man was holding to the end, just as Notta had sung!

"Fast asleep," muttered the clown, holding Bob a bit tighter. And so he was fast asleep and dreaming of the sandman's balloon. Notta meant to keep awake, for he was not so sure there were no bears in this dark forest, but the day's experiences had so tired him that, in a short time, he was sound asleep himself.

No sooner had Notta's eyes closed, than a little, bent fairyman came tiptoeing from behind the tree. He held his lantern close to Notta's face.

"Such a beautiful voice," sighed the little fellow to himself. "It would be a shame to have it swallowed up by one of the forest creatures. And this must be a child." He held his lantern close to Bob's red head. He watched them for a while in silence, then pulling his silvery beard thoughtfully, set the little red lantern beside them and pattered off into the darkness.

Notta had been right. It was a fairy forest. Every forest in the wonderful land of Oz is a fairy forest, inhabited by strange creatures and peoples. But the clown's song had so pleased the old fairyman that he determined to protect the two strangers from all harm, and though many bears and other beasts came snuffling past, they dared not approach, for the red lantern told them plainly it was "Claws off." So grumbling and growling, they went searching further for their dinners.

The little lantern disappeared with the first ray of sunshine and, quite unconscious of the dangers they had slept through, Notta and Bob awoke almost at the same minute.

"Well," yawned Notta, winking the only eye he had open, "we're still here, I see." He rolled over and over and turned a dozen handsprings to get the kinks out of his back. "I've often wondered what made flowers so stiff and now I know. It's sleeping on the ground. I'm glad I'm not a flower, aren't you, Bob?"

Bob nodded and hopped up quite briskly. There was a fine breeze blowing, and the day was so sunny and bright that he felt ready for anything, and just to look at Notta made him feel happy.

"Do you think we'll find the Emerald City today?" he asked, skipping along beside the clown, who was making for a little brook just ahead.

"Well, according to Mustafa, it ought to take three days," answered Notta. "But Mustafa was never in a circus, and anyone who has been in a circus can travel three times as fast as other folks, so I shouldn't be surprised at all if we were to be eating our supper in this Emerald City tonight. If I had only wished old Billy along he could have carried us in style."

"The elephant?" exclaimed Bob, with round eyes. The clown nodded and, kneeling down on the edge of the brook, began to splash water on his face and hands. Bob did the same, and had just taken off his shoes in order to paddle properly, when a cry from Notta made him pause.

"Now I've done it," wailed the clown dolefully, jumping up and down.

"What?" asked Bob curiously.

"Washed my face." Notta pointed to his face, which was quite red and shiny from the cold water. 'And I haven't any powder! Have you any powder, Bob? Oh, my! Cold pie! It's hard enough to be funny with a white face, but without one I simply could not joke at all. Whatever's to become of us? I'm no clown this way.

Bob was terribly distressed, for if Notta couldn't be funny nothing would seem the same. He felt hastily in his pockets-not that he expected to find anything, but because he didn't know what else to do and in the last one his hand closed on a bag of candy the old gentleman had bought for him at the circus. It was squashed and sticky from being slept on, but mechanically Bob handed it over.

"Why, it's marshmallows!" cried Notta in delight. "Bob, you have saved the honor of my profession. We must preserve these carefully." He patted his face with a small sugary marshmallow and surveyed his reflection with pleased satisfaction. "I feel funny already," he announced cheerfully. Bob was much relieved and Notta did look more natural with his face whitened.

"Now for breakfast," said the clown, licking the sugar off his lips. It was great fun, Bob thought, washing in a brook and having breakfast under the trees. After finishing off some more of Mustafa's sandwiches, they started quite briskly through the forest.

"I think the rules are going to work better today," chuckled the clown, "I will use disguise number three. Number three's a bear, Bob Up. Now, here's our program, first disguise, then politeness, then joke and run. We shall get along famously." Notta sprang into the air and clicked his heels together for very light-heartedness.

Bob was thinking to himself that Notta's last disguise had not helped them much, but he was too polite to mention such a thing, and as there seemed to be no danger in sight he trotted along contentedly, stopping now and then to pick the bright blue flowers that grew everywhere under the trees. The forest was not so large as it had seemed in the night, and in an hour they had come to the end of it and started down a narrow lane.

"Well, we're still going north." Notta looked complacently at a large sign post that stood at the beginning of the lane.

"North Road to D," said the sign briefly.

"Wonder what D stands for?"

"Because it can't sit down." The sign snapped out the sentence so suddenly that Notta tripped and fell over a stone, and Bob simply gasped with astonishment.

"They didn't paint any line for it to sit on," explained the sign post patiently.

"Where does this lane go to?" gulped the clown, edging over and taking Bob's hand.

"It doesn't go any place. It stays where it is.

"See here," puffed the clown in exasperation, "I never heard of a talking sign post, but so long as you can talk, you might give us a few directions.

"I only give one direction and that's north. You can take it, or leave it."

Notta tried the post with a few more questions, but it just sniffed sulkily, and seeing no more was to be got out of it, the two hurried on.

"Maybe D stands for Dorothy," said Bob, after a little silence.

"Maybe," mused the clown, looking uneasily over his shoulder, "but this is a strange country, and we'll have to take it as we find it. Hello, what's this?"

A sudden turn brought them up short, for the lane was closed off by a gray wall, so high one could not possibly climb over and so wide that it would take days to walk 'round. And in the wall were seven heavy oak doors.

"This is the Kingdom of Doorways," announced a large sign, posted half way up the walls. "Be sure to use the right door."

"But which is the right door?" gasped the clown, half expecting the sign to answer him.

"There are seven," exclaimed Bob, who had been counting them up on his fingers.

"And only one of them right," choked the clown anxiously. The two stood perfectly still, gazing in fascination at the seven doors.

"Which is the right door?" repeated Notta, scratching his ear doubtfully.

CHAPTER 6 The Seven Doors

As Bob and Notta came closer, they noticed that each door had a brass plate nailed on the center panel, engraved with various names and instructions. "Keep out!" directed one shortly.

"Well, that surely cannot be the right one, exclaimed the clown, moving hastily to the next.

"Don't waken the baby," advised the second door. So Notta and Bob tiptoed carefully past,

"This way to the Dorms. No admittance till February," said the third door.

"And it's only May now. We cannot possibly wait that long." Notta took off his hat and made the door a polite bow. "Besides," he explained to Bob, who was slowly spelling out the words on the fourth door, "dorms stands for dormitories and dormitories stand for sleep. Who wants to sleep?"

"King Theodore the Third," said the fourth door.

"Whew!" whistled Notta. "Another King! Come away, Bob Up, I don't trust these king chaps at all."

"The Queen," announced the plate on the fifth door proudly, "Adora the First. No one without a title need apply."

"Well? we may not be earls, but we're early," chuckled Notta, winking at Bob. They hurried curiously to the sixth door. "Push!" said the plate.

"But would that be wise?" ruminated Notta, rubbing his forehead anxiously. "Let's try the last door, Bob."

"Don't try me too much or I'll fall on your head," wheezed a disagreeable voice. "Haven't you anything better to do than go trying poor hardworking doors?"

After a talking sign, Notta and Bob should not have been surprised. But they were—simply astonished—and for a moment could do nothing but stare.

"This door answers itself," said the plate on the seventh and strangest of all the strange doorways.

"No bread, no ice, no milk; and if you're selling brushes you might as well go at once," continued the door sulkily. "We don't need any."

"We're not!" interrupted Notta, in a slightly choked voice. "We just want to get in."

"What for?" asked the door stubbornly. "Is it a door matter? Have you cards of admission?"

"We're hunting Dorothy and the Cowardly Lion," volunteered Bob timidly.

"A likely story," sniffed the door, looking contemptuously from one to the other. "But what could one expect of people with curly ears."

"We have not curly ears," cried Bob, stamping his foot indignantly.

"Don't argue," said the door stiffly. "How's your temper—long or short?" It rolled its wooden knot eyes inquiringly at Notta.

"What's that got to do with our getting in?" asked the clown impatiently.

"Short!" muttered the door triumphantly to itself. "No, you'd better stay out, I think. Her highness is very slammish today, and the last time I let strangers in she nearly twisted my knob off. That's the trouble around here-when anything goes wrong, everybody slams the door. Sometimes I almost wish I were a sofa cushion."

"I wish you were, myself," frowned the clown, "for then I'd toss you out of the way instead of wasting my breath here. Are you going to let us in or not?"

"Not!" snapped the door, rattling its knob vindictively. "And I don't care a slam what you wish."

"Bob," said Notta, turning his back on the door, "did you ever hear anything like that? Let's try Number Two. I'd rather risk wakening a baby than trying to argue with a door that answers itself."

"I'm not afraid of babies," said Bob following manfully. The knob of Number Two turned easily and the door swung open with such a rush that both Notta and Bob fell through. At the first glimpse of that baby, Notta clapped his hand over Bob's mouth and, rising with quaking knees; pulled him toward the door. For you see it was a baby dragon-a snoring, roaring baby dragon as long and heavy as a freight train. It gave a shrill whistle and snort as the door slammed shut and Notta and Bob sat down in a weak heap.

"Baby," choked the clown, rubbing his eyes, which were full of dragon smoke. "Well, if that's the baby, preserve me from the rest of the family!"

"Will it come after us?" shuddered Bob, in a frightened whisper.

"How did you like our little doorter?" The seventh door looked sideways at the two and chuckled wickedly. "Still want to get in?"

"Certainly," said Notta, turning a dozen cartwheels to relieve his nervousness, "but not that way." He winked reassuringly at Bob. "Before I do anything else I must put on my disguise. No wonder things are going so badly."

"Don't you think you look silly enough?" wheezed the door rudely, as the clown drew out disguise number three. Notta paid no attention to this remark but, turning his back, struggled hastily into number three. Even Bob felt reassured, for this time Notta was disguised as a bear-a huge and terrible-looking bear. Grasping Bob's hand he rushed at the door marked "Push," with such a ferocious growl that Number Seven shook like a leaf.

"Oh, my hinges," chattered the door, "that went through me like a sword." But immediately afterward it broke into derisive laughter. For no sooner had Notta and Bob pushed Number Six, than Number Six pushed back, and so hard that the two went flying into a clump of blueberry bushes.

"That's the door way to treat 'em, brother," roared Seven, and Notta picked himself up and straightened his bear skin.

"Now some people," muttered the clown, helping Bobbie out of the brushes and shaking his paw at the door, "some people would be discouraged. But no more side shows, Bob. Let's try the Queen's door, if we're to be thrown out it might as well be done royally."

There was a silver bell on the Queen's door and Notta rang it quickly, before either of them

had time to change their minds. For a moment nothing at all happened. Then the door knob disappeared. But horrors! Next instant it shot out, seized the two in a terrible clutch, and dragged them through the keyhole. Yes, it really did!

Not only had they been pulled through the keyhole, but they felt as if they had been pulled through the keyhole. Even Notta had nothing to say. He just lay on his back and panted. Whether the keyhole had stretched as they went through or whether they had shrunk, I cannot say. I only know they went through somehow and were on the other side of the Queen's door. "Cards, please!" A doorman in a handsome blue satin uniform was leaning over them. "Are you deaf?" he asked angrily. "Are you dumb?" He thumped Notta on the head with his silver card plate.

"Neither," groaned the clown. "What do you want?"

"Your titles," snapped the doorman, looking nervously over his shoulder. As he did so, a vase, three books and a pair of fire tongs struck the wall just above his head.

"Oh, the Queen is in a fury, whatever shall I do next," he mumbled to himself, dropping the silver plate and then picking it up again.

"Let's run," said Bob, pressing close to Notta. But the clown had already recovered his spirits and was fumbling in his pockets under his bear skin.

"There you are. He calmly dropped two large buttons on the doorman's plate. "Just lead us to her Majesty at once.

"Someone's been at the jam again," quavered the doorman without looking at the buttons. "Oh, the Queen's in a fury-a fury-a fury!"

At each fury he gave a little hop.

"You said that before," observed Notta, looking around curiously.

"A fury! A fury! A fury!" persisted the doorman, continuing to hop, and as each hop carried him farther away he was soon out of sight.

"Wait!" cried Notta, lumbering after him, for his disguise made him clumsy.

"Wait!" cried Bob Up, running after Notta. Down the long hall they both ran, and, turning suddenly, found themselves in a large, impressive throne room. The entire wall space was taken up by the doors of every size and shape imaginable and before each door stood a doorman similar to the one they had already seen. In the center of the room were two magnificent thrones. On the first sat a large, handsome Queen and on the second a small nervous King. The King's crown was entirely made of china door knobs, mounted on gold bars, while the Queen's was made of many gold door keys. The Queen was looking at the buttons as Bob and Notta entered.

"Buttons!" hissed her Majesty contemptuously. "What do buttons stand for?"

"Us, your Highness!" replied Notta, bowing as low as his disguise would permit, and drawing Bob forward.

The King twiddled his thumbs and recited:

"B stands for buttons And B stands for bears, B stands for buttons and boy-Bring two chairs!"

"Nonsense!" thundered the Queen. The doormen hastily brought two chairs and Bob and Notta sat down.

"I think he'll appreciate rule two," whispered the clown. "He's quite polite himself."

"Theodore," said the Queen, her face beginning to work curiously, "Theodore, I believe they stole the jam. Bears and little boys are always stealing jam. And what right have they here without titles? Where are their titles?"

"Adorable Queen," said the clown, half rising and pointing with his paw to the buttons, "those are the badges of our order. We belong, your Highness, to the ancient and honorable Order of Bachelors, and are at present lords of all we survey."

"Do you believe that?" The Queen turned and squarely faced the King.

"No!" said Theodore emphatically, turning to squarely face the Queen. "How could I, when there is no such place. Where is this All-we-survey?" he asked sternly. "Is it in Oz?"

Notta was so surprised at the sudden turn the conversation had taken that he sat down with a thump.

"He's a dorm!" screeched the Queen, her voice rising higher and higher. "He's a dorm-that's what he is!"

"What's a dorm?" gasped Bob, so surprised that he forgot to be frightened.

"A dorm is an animal that lies dormant in cold weather, like a bear or a 'possum, my dear Buttons," explained the King, shaking his finger at Bob, "but he's got no business here now.

"I see it all," panted the Queen beginning to wave her arms. "He didn't come here to sleep but to steal! Theodore, he has stolen the jam!"

The King wagged his head from side to side as he repeated this verse:

"He's come without reason And quite out of season; I agree with you, Ma'am, He has stolen the jam!"

"Put out your tongue!" commanded the Queen, waving a bunch of keys at Notta. This Notta was unable to do, for his bear head had no tongue.

"You see!" shrilled the Queen triumphantly, "he is afraid to put out his tongue. Slammer," she called, turning to a huge doorman, who stood behind the throne, "what is the punishment for door jam stealing?"

The doorman whisked a little book from his pocket and, after flipping over a number of pages, read in a high nasal voice, "Any one caught stealing the Queen's door jam shall have his knob twisted and every door in the kingdom slammed on him besides."

"How fearfully unhealthy," muttered Notta, rising to protest his innocence. But the Queen waved him back, and banging her keys on the arm of her throne called loudly, "Slammer, carry out the sentence!"

Slammer immediately blew a sharp whistle and every doorman in the room sprang toward the trembling Notta.

"Stop!" cried Bob, doubling up his fists. "He didn't steal your old jam. 'Tisn't a bear at all, it's Notta!"

"Notta?" gasped the King, rubbing his watery blue eyes, and leaning forward.

"Not a bear!" puffed the clown, hastily snatching off his bear head, just as the first of the doormen grasped him by the shoulders.

CHAPTER 7 The Escape From Doorways

"What do you mean by standing there and telling us you're not a bear?" puffed the King, as soon as he had got his breath.

"It was a mistake, I see that now," said the clown, hastily stepping out of his disguise. "If your Highness will overlook it this once, it will never occur again.

"Shall we overlook it?" asked the King, turning to squarely face the Queen. Adora was staring in amazement at the clown, and being a very curious Queen she decided not to have the intruder slammed till she found out all about him. "We will overlook it for the present," she answered haughtily, waving the doormen back to their places.

The King smiled and chanted this couplet:

"She'll overlook it for the present; Be seated, please, and both look pleasant!"

Bob sat down with a sigh of relief. What queer beings this King and Queen were! Everything was queer, but for some reason or other Bob rather enjoyed it. King Theodore was not nearly so fierce as Mustafa, and his singular habit of breaking into verse simply fascinated the little boy. "This brings us to rule three," confided Notta in a hoarse whisper. "Joke and run, you know!"

"When is a door not a door?" asked the Queen, pointing her finger suddenly at the clown.

"When it's adorable, like your Majesty," replied Notta with a grin. "Or when it's a jar of door jam, like the one your Highness has just lost!"

Before Adora had recovered from her surprise, Notta pointed his finger at the King and shouted, "Why is a tomato like a book?"

"Because it grows on a vine," answered King Theodore sulkily, "and you needn't scream at me like that!"

"Wrong!" said Notta triumphantly. "A tomato's like a book because it's red through."

"Do you believe that?" asked the King, turning to squarely face the Queen.

"No!" said her Majesty shortly, "I don't."

"But a book couldn't grow on a vine," objected Bob Up mildly.

"My books do," insisted Theodore, pursing up his lips.

"Where were you brought up?" asked the Queen, staring at Bob severely.

"You needn't answer if you don't want to," whispered the King, as Bob squirmed uneasily around in his chair. "The main thing is, what brought you up here?"

"If it's a story, rise and speak. What do you want? Whom do you seek?"

"It is a story," said Notta, springing up quickly, and glad of this opportunity to tell their strange adventures and to ask a few questions about the Emerald City. "A long story, your Highness," continued Notta. In as few words as possible he told of his former life in the circus, of their flight to Mudge, of Mustafa's determination to have them capture the Cowardly Lion.

As Notta paused for breath, the King said, "Shall we let them pass through Doorways, my love?" Instead of answering the Queen leaned over and whispered in Theodore's ear.

"Her Highness wishes to be amused," announced the King, straightening up. "You said in this circus it was your business to make people laugh. Well, if you can make us laugh you may continue your journey. You may begin now and you may have three trials."

The King folded his hands on his stomach and leaned back vastly pleased with himself. Notta's forehead wrinkled anxiously, for Queen Adora looked as if she had never laughed in her life. But with a wink at Bob the clown began. First he let out an ear splitting screech that so alarmed the King his crown fell off. Then he turned a complete somersault, chair and all, ran across the room on his hands and cartwheeled back so fast one could not have told whether he was a person or a pinwheel. Next he bent double, seized his ankles with his hands and jumped in this singular position entirely over Bob, finishing with a neat bow before the Queen's throne.

"Do you think that's funny?" puffed the Queen, turning to squarely face the King, who was mopping his brow with a silk handkerchief.

"No-no!" stuttered Theodore, in a slightly cracked voice. "It quite upset me, my love. Slammer, where's my crown?" Slammer recovered the King's crown and then both their Majesties stared solemnly at Notta. The clown stared back, a puzzled expression on his round jolly face. Then, dragging a huge handkerchief from his pocket, he whirled it over his hand and instantly it tied itself into a foolish rag baby, which the clown clasped to his bosom, crooning:

"I love my baby, 'deed I do, Indeed, indeed I do! He has no hair upon his head, But neither, Sir, have you!

"But his will grow, it will, I know, As soon as he is big, But yours will never grow-and so

You'd better buy a wig!"

"Wh- at!" screamed King Theodore furiously, and Notta, dropping the handkerchief baby, noticed for the first time that the King's head was entirely bald. Bob Up was holding himself together and smiling into his collar.

"Shocking!" coughed Adora, looking at the clown through her eye glasses.

"I was singing about Slammer," gulped Notta, noting in an instant that the chief doorman was bald too. "Now just let me tell you a little joke. There was once a triangular pig, who could dance a triangular jig, and-"

"Do you believe that?" shrilled King Theodore, again turning to face his Queen.

"No," snapped the Queen, shutting her lips very tight. "How could I?"

"Then, if the clouds rolled away, would they be mist?" roared Notta, before they could continue their disagreeing. He bounced four feet into the air and pointed playfully at the King.

"I wouldn't miss 'em," replied the King sullenly. "Do you think that's funny?" Again he turned to the Queen, who shook her head emphatically.

"Well, I think it's funny!" said Bob, jumping out of his chair. He looked indignantly from the King to the Queen.

"Then why don't you laugh?" asked the King accusingly. Poor Bob couldn't explain that laughing was a hard matter for an orphan, so he sat down rather suddenly, while Notta began looking all around as if he were hunting something. He searched on each step of the King's throne, then he looked into his Majesty's lap and, finally, running around to the back peered under Theodore's collar.

"What's the matter?" asked his Majesty irritably. "What are you looking for now?"

"My joke," sighed the clown, "I'm looking for my poor little joke. It was lost on you. When I asked, 'If the clouds rolled away, would they be mist,' you should have said it's according to the way you spell 'em-see?"

"No," said Theodore, sternly, "I don't,

"I only see you are a dunce; You haven't made us laugh, not once!"

The Queen nodded emphatically at this and, glaring scornfully at the two intruders, swept out of the throne room.

"Last rule," whispered Notta, winking at Bob for out of the tail of his eye, he could see the King signaling Slammer. Rushing forward impetuously he flung up his hand. "Could your Majesty tell me a word to rhyme with toboggan?" he asked pleadingly. Immediately King Theodore's face lit up with pleasure. He closed his eyes and began to drum with one hand on the arm of his throne. If there was one thing he adored it was rhyming.

He forgot to finish his directions to Slammer and instead mumbled hurriedly under his breath, "Choggin, foggin, doggon, noggin, loggin, joggin. Ah, I have it-joggin!" He opened his eyes and looked

around triumphantly, but the clown and Bob Up were nowhere to be seen. In fact they had run as soon as the King's eyes closed. For Notta, while endeavoring to make their Majesties laugh, had discovered that one of the doors said "Out." And out they went, bowling over doormen like ten pins in their headlong flight. As the door slammed they slid down a steep dark passageway and in about two minutes shot out into the middle of a dusty road. Above them on a high hill rose the gray walls of the singular Kingdom of Doorways.

"Toboggan was right," muttered the clown, rising stiffly. "This country grows odder and odder, Bob. What do they call it now-Oz? But never mind, we shall have lots to tell each other on stormy nights when we reach the states. Lots and lots!"

Bob did not answer. Instead he clutched Notta's wide pantaloons and pointed toward a large clump of bushes. Looking out from the leaves was the head of a huge, shaggy lion. A shudder ran down the clown's back. He tried to remember the procedure of Bill, the old lion tamer in the circus. 'Subdue the creature with your eye,' Bill said. Yes, that was what he had said. Notta's knees rattled like castanets, but with a frightened gulp he stared the lion straight in the eye. For a moment nothing happened, then with a gusty sigh the lion began to speak.

"What have they done with the rest of me?" it roared mournfully.

"Who?" stuttered Notta, getting a good hold on Bob and making ready to run at the lion's first move.

"The Mudgers," wheezed the lion, two tears rolling down its nose. With many gulps and sighs it told them how Tazzywaller had cut it in two and imprisoned its back half in the lion enclosure.

"You mean to say that you were cut in half and still live to tell the tale?" gasped Notta in astonishment.

"I don't know what you mean by telling the tail. How can I tell the tail anything when all my connections with it are cut off? Oh, my poor tail, how it must miss me!" moaned the half lion. "Then you only have two legs," said Bob in a relieved tone and coming out from behind Notta. The lion nodded gloomily. "If I had four, do you think I'd be standing propped up against these bushes. I'd have eaten you long ago."

"What a blessing," murmured the clown under his breath, "that it's only half a lion."

"I'd like a little sympathy," continued the lion in its mournful voice. "If the little fellow would pat me on the head, I think it would ease me a bit."

"Shall I?" asked Bob Up doubtfully.

"How do we know you won't bite him?" asked Notta cautiously.

"I haven't the courage," replied the lion dolefully. "Besides my stomach is gone and that rather takes the appetite away, you know. Oh, my poor little empty stomach, how dreadfully it must feel! Then, to bite a person I should have to work myself up into a rage, and that I cannot do without a tail to lash. And half my heart is missing so I—"

"Do everything half-heartedly," finished Notta, with a wink at Bob.

"Exactly," blubbered the half lion. Two more tears rolled down its nose, and these so affected

Bob Up that he stepped bravely over and patted its mane.

"Harder!" cried the half lion, closing its eyes. "Harder! Harder!" Notta seized a stick and fell to patting the lion's head with this, but it kept roaring harder until Bob Up and Notta were perfectly breathless.

"Sorry," puffed the clown at last, "but we'll have to say goodbye now. We're on our way to the Emerald City."

"Are you?" The half lion opened its eyes and regarded them with new interest. "There's a wonderful wizard in the Emerald City," it began in a more cheerful roar. "Could you, would you, tell him about my sad separation? Tell him I am pining for my better half and perhaps he would put me together again. Promise to tell him." The poor beast was so earnest that he almost lost his balance.

"Why, certainly we will tell him," said Notta, who was the most obliging soul imaginable.

"We'll be glad to, old fellow, but I didn't think there were any more wizards."

"No wizards?" coughed the lion, surveying the clown in amazement. "Why, Oz is full of wizards. Just keep going north and you'll soon find that out. I would go along with you, but I haven't quite learned to travel on two legs, and I'm so tired of standing."

"Why don't you sit down," asked Bob thoughtlessly. The lion groaned and looked at him reproachfully, and seeing it was going to cry again Notta began to move off.

"By the way," he asked, pausing suddenly, "did you come through Doorways?"

"Yes!" sobbed the lion, sniffing with each word, "through the right door."

"Which door was that?"

"I don't remember," sighed the half lion drearily. "I remember nothing nowadays. When I used to forget a fact all I had to do was to scratch my head with my hind leg and instantly it came back, but now-" The lion began to sob heavily.

"Well, goodbye!" said Notta uneasily, taking Bob's hand. "If we see this wizard you've mentioned we'll tell him your sad story."

"Goodbye," choked the lion, waving his paw feebly.

"I'd like to see a real wizard, Notta," said Bob Up, as they trudged down the dusty road.

"Odder and odder!" murmured the clown, shaking his head in bewilderment. "I declare, Bob, if you weren't along I should think I were asleep and dreaming all this."

"Here's another sign," whispered Bob Up in a low voice so the sign would not hear him. "Wonder if it talks too."

"I dare say they all can if they want to replied Notta. "At any rate a sort of sign language."

"North Road to U," said this sign, in large blue letters.

"D stood for doorways. I wonder what U stands for?" mused the little boy, staring up at the sign with both hands in his pockets.

"Maybe it stands for us?" chuckled the clown, turning a handspring.

"You!" sneered the sign, giving itself a little shake. "Why, I wouldn't stand for you a single minute. I'd rather-." What it would rather Notta and Bob did not wait to hear. Seizing hands, they ran gaily down the road toward the unknown and curious country of U.

CHAPTER 8 The Cowardly Lion's Quest

Quite unconscious of Mustafa's evil plans for his capture, the Cowardly Lion of Oz paced to and fro on the wide veranda of the loveliest palace in Oz. It was early morning in the Emerald City, and Ozma and her court had not yet risen, but many of the palace pets were abroad and talking sociably together in the garden. Ozma's Saw Horse was running races with Hank, Betsy Bobbin's small mule, the Comfortable Camel and Doubtful Dromedary were ambling down the paths in their wobbly-kneed fashion, while Dorothy's little dog, Toto, and the Glass Cat were arguing over the Patchwork Girl's last verses. They all seemed happy and contented and the Cowardly Lion, noting this, sighed heavily. "Not one of them is ever afraid," he murmured sorrowfully. "I, of all creatures in Oz, am the only cowardly one.

"What say?" The Cowardly Lion jumped, as he always did at an unexpected sound, then gave a little roar of relief as the Soldier with the Green Whiskers stepped out from behind a pillar.

"What say?" repeated the Soldier, putting down his gun which was never loaded, and regarding the Cowardly Lion inquiringly.

"I was saying that I am the only cowardly person in Oz."

"Well, you can fight, can't you?" The Soldier tugged his green whiskers thoughtfully as he asked this question. "Now, I am a very brave man, but I can never fight, so there you are. This was perfectly true. The Soldier with the Green Whiskers, who was Ozma's entire army, never was afraid, but he always ran at the first sign of danger. While the Cowardly Lion trembled terribly as enemies approached, he always fought until he overcame them.

"So what's the difference," said the Soldier with the Green Whiskers, shouldering his gun and marching down the steps. "You feel cowardly and act bravely. I feel brave and act cowardly." "It makes a great difference to me," mumbled the Cowardly Lion. "I want to feel brave. Oh, if only once I could feel brave!" Shaking his mane mournfully, he padded down the steps after the Soldier with the Green Whiskers, and soon came upon the Comfortable Camel and Doubtful Dromedary, who were swaying idly under a tall breakfast tree.

"Morning," wheezed the Comfortable Camel, twitching his crooked nose. "Handsome as ever, I see."

"I doubt that, Camy," said the Doubtful Dromedary, eyeing the Cowardly Lion solemnly.

"He's always doubting things," smiled the Comfortable Camel, rolling his large, limpid eyes. "Now, I never do."

"He's right this time. I'm not handsome at all; no coward could be handsome," said the lion gruffly, flinging himself on the ground beside the strange pair. "Ah, if I could only feel courageous!"

"You're nice as you are, you dear cowardly old thing," snorted the camel, wagging his head affectionately. "Why, if you were brave, you would be just like any other lion. It's being cowardly that makes you so interesting."

"I'd rather be brave than interesting," rumbled the lion sadly. "You know perfectly well that courage is the finest thing in the world."

"I doubt that," put in the dromedary, shifting a mouthful of grass from one cheek to the other, "I doubt that very much."

"What's the matter?" cried the Patchwork Girl, bouncing out merrily from the other side of the tree. "You all sound as solemn as Pokes!"

The Patchwork Girl is a great favorite in the Emerald City. She was made long ago by a magician's wife and brought to life by the powder of life. But Ojo, a little Munchkin boy, who happened to be present while the magician was mixing Scrap's brains, put in a large portion of cleverness and curiosity while the old wizard's back was turned, so that instead of being a good and obedient servant as the wizard had intended her to be, the Patchwork Girl was full of fun and mischief. Indeed, she refused to be a servant at all, and ran off to the Emerald City, where Ozma has allowed her to live ever since. The Emerald City is the capital of Oz and located in the exact center of that great and magic wonderland. Its palace of green marble and emeralds, its flowering gardens and quaint green cottages make it the loveliest of all fairy cities, and so many strange and delightful people live there it is the most interesting place you could imagine. First in interest is Ozma, the fairy ruler of Oz. No one could help loving her. Then there is Dorothy, who has had more adventures than any little girl you have ever heard of and who prefers to be a Princess in Oz to returning to her old home in Kansas. There is Tik Tok, a marvelous machine man who is bright as the copper that he is made of, and who can think, walk and work when properly wound. And there's the Scarecrow, as lively and accomplished a gentleman as ever advised a Queen. Oh, think of a live Scarecrow! There's Jack Pumpkinhead, made entirely of wood, excepting his pumpkin head, and there's Sir Hokus of Pokes, a knight so many centuries old that only in Oz could he be alive at all. There's the Tin Woodman, Emperor of the Winkies, who comes often to the capital to visit his old friends.

There are hundreds of the gentle Oz folk, who live in the little green cottages and bow politely when friends pass. There are the magnificent courtiers and palace servants, ready at a moment's notice to pass round lemonade, while the Scarecrow dishes out Oz-cream and cake. And last but not least there are the amusing animals who have come to live in the royal stables. No wonder everyone is anxious to visit the Emerald City. If I could just find a magic umbrella or a handy cyclone I would go myself. Why, it would be worth the journey just to hear the Cowardly Lion and Comfortable Camel talking together like old cronies. The Comfortable Camel and the Doubtful Dromedary were recently discovered by Sir Hokus of Pokes and Dorothy, and are comparative new comers in the Emerald City, but the Cowardly Lion was one of the very first of the Oz creatures to arrive at the capital and is a prime favorite with everyone from Princess Dorothy to the royal cook.

But all the time I've been telling you this, the conversation under the breakfast tree has been growing more interesting.

"I thought the Wizard of Oz gave you a large dose of courage when you first came here," drawled the camel, looking anxiously up at the Patchwork Girl, who was swinging head down from the breakfast tree.

"He did," mourned the Cowardly Lion dreamily, "but it has worn off and, though he has tried and tried, he can't seem to mix up any more.

"What is courage? Does it grow Like potatoes in a row? Don't ask me for I don't know!"

shouted Scraps, the Patchwork Girl, diving suddenly from the tree top and bouncing upon the Doubtful Dromedary. Being stuffed with cotton made Scraps very daring.

"I've a hunch," began the Comfortable Camel, very much relieved that the Patchwork Girl had fallen on his friend.

"Where? On your back?" screamed Scraps, flinging her arms about his neck.

"I've a hunch," continued the camel calmly, paying no attention at all to the Patchwork Girl, "that courage isn't the way you feel, but the way you act. As you always act bravely, why worry about the way you feel?"

"But you never felt as frightened as I feel," objected the Cowardly Lion.

"His knees do quake, His teeth do chatter, His big old heart goes pitter patter! But what's the odds-Though stiff with fright He still can fight with mane and might!"

cried Scraps, sitting down with a thud. "The more mane the more might," she finished brilliantly.

"So rub some tonic on your brain And just increase your might and mane!"

"I doubt that," mumbled the Doubtful Dromedary, looking at Scraps reprovingly.

"There might be something in it," said the camel, chewing a wisp of grass in his slow precise fashion.

"My mane is a little thin," mused the Cowardly Lion, rubbing it thoughtfully with his paw.

"If I were you," said the Patchwork Girl, rising unsteadily, "I should find a very brave person and then eat him up. That ought to give you a big dose of courage.

"I doubt that," said the Doubtful Dromedary sharply.

"Think how uncomfortable it would be for the poor brave person," sighed the camel. "My dear, I am afraid you have no heart."

"Of course I have no heart," cried Scraps, starting to run down the path, "but I have a

marvelous head."

The Comfortable Camel sighed and glanced uneasily at the Cowardly Lion. The Cowardly Lion had a faraway look in his eye, as if Scraps' naughty suggestion had given him an idea, and it was not long before he made some excuse to get away from the two gentle creatures. He wanted to think. After all, why should he, the most famous lion in all Oz, forever be called cowardly? He would tell no one, but he would go off on a long journey and perhaps even to himself the Cowardly Lion did not say it, but the idea of swallowing a brave person did seem a reasonable way to acquire courage. "I need never tell little Dorothy," muttered the great beast uncomfortably, "but how proud she will be when I return full of courage!"

He slipped noiselessly out of the quiet, lovely garden and, avoiding the yellow brick road, struck off through a deep forest toward the Munchkin Country to the south. Many brave woodcutters live in the Munchkin forests, and the Cowardly Lion was resolved darkly to swallow the bravest of them, ax and all. "If only my cowardly heart does not fail me at the last moment," he groaned nervously, as he went crackling through the heavy underbrush. "I could swallow one whole, and that oughtn't to hurt much." Already his kind, cowardly, comfortable old heart was beginning to quake at the thought of swallowing a woodcutter. But, arguing and rumbling to himself, he continued his race toward the south. By the time the castle clocks chimed eight, he was miles and miles away from the safe and delightful Emerald City of Oz.

CHAPTER 9 In Search of a Brave Man

The Cowardly Lion was familiar with all the forests in Oz, and though the one through which he was passing was so dense that, even in the morning, only a dim light filtered through the trees, he had no difficulty finding his way. In the center of this forest lived a small colony of woodcutters, and the Cowardly Lion was heading straight for this colony, roaring and growling to keep up his courage. The more he thought about devouring a brave man, the faster he ran. The thing would have to be done quickly or not at all—quickly before his heart failed him entirely. As the hollow blows of an ax came echoing through the stillness, a shiver ran down his back and, when a sudden leap brought him almost upon a tall Munchkin forester, he stopped altogether. At the sound of the crackling branches, the man turned, but when he saw the new comer was a lion, he calmly went on with his work.

"There's bravery for you," gulped the Cowardly Lion to himself. Now was his chance, for the man's back was turned. But it was no use; he simply could not spring on a man brave enough to turn his back, so instead he sighed heavily and sat down.

"How's the hunting?" asked the woodcutter gruffly, after he had brought down his tree.

"Why, not very good, thank you," replied the lion pensively. This was worse still. Could one eat up a man in the middle of a conversation?

"Well, now that's too bad." The woodcutter mopped his brow and turned 'round slowly. "Tell me," asked the lion, blinking his eyes unhappily, "are you a brave man?"

"Well, that," pondered the woodcutter, sitting down on a stump and wiping off his ax with a bunch of leaves, "that I hardly know."

"Don't you think talking to a lion is pretty brave?" asked the great beast hopefully. He gathered himself for a spring. If the man said yes, he would certainly eat him up and have an end to this disagreeable business. But instead, the woodcutter regarded him closely.

"Say!" he burst out, hopping to his feet and giving the Cowardly Lion a resounding whack on the back, "say, this is an honor. Sorry I didn't recognize you at once. Boys!" He raised his voice joyfully, "Boys, here's the good old Cowardly Lion, the Cowardly Lion himself. Come on out. We've often heard about you," explained the big man, fairly beaming upon the embarrassed lion, "but as none of us ever go to the Emerald City this is the first we've seen of you. How is the Scarecrow and Ozma, and how's Princess Dorothy? You see, even though we live in the woods, we know all about you famous folks."

The Cowardly Lion put his paw to his head and tried to think. It was upsetting to have a man you intended to devour so frightfully polite. "How did you know I was the Cowardly Lion?" he asked in a husky voice.

"Why, first I thought you were like any other lion, then I saw you were all of a tremble, and I says to myself, says I, 'Wilby, my lad, you're looking straight at this famous Cowardly Lion of Oz.' I tell you it's a proud day for me. To think I'm talking face to face with a lion who has saved his country as many times as you have. I declare now, it's a pleasure."

Before the Cowardly Lion could answer, a dozen more woodcutters came running toward them and when he had been introduced by Wilby Whut to each woodcutter in turn, and to the wives and children of each woodcutter, he had neither the breath nor the inclination to devour anybody. The children hastily wove him a flower chain and crowed with delight when he trotted them about on his back. The women brought out their choicest meats and dishes of honey to refresh him, while the men sat around and listened solemnly to all he had to say of doings in the Emerald City. Why, there had not been such a holiday in the forest since the wicked Witch of the West had been destroyed by little Dorothy.

The Cowardly Lion, ashamed of the dreadful purpose that had brought him to the forest, outdid himself to entertain them. And so enchanted were the kindly woodcutters with his conversation that he could not tear himself away until late in the afternoon.

"I'll never be able to eat a woodcutter," groaned the Cowardly Lion, trotting slowly along in the gathering dusk. "Never after the way they have treated me. I'll have to find some other sort of brave person to swallow." Scraps' advice was proving difficult right at the start, and very thoughtfully the Cowardly Lion continued his journey.

It was night time when he reached the edge of the forest-night time and not a brave man in sight. But in the southern part of the Munchkin Country there are many great mountains and among the sturdy Munchkin mountaineers surely there would be a brave man. So the lion, who did not mind at all traveling in the dark, ran steadily toward the south, through quiet little villages, through fragrant fields and meadows, even swimming the broad and turbulent Munchkin river. It was rather lonely, and he wished Dorothy or Sir Hokus of Pokes were along, but he well knew that neither would approve of his plan for acquiring courage. He was not sure that he approved of it himself, but he kept on arguing in his head and shuddering in his heart, and sighing because he was so great a coward. Just as the sun rose he came upon a brave man, asleep under a blue rose bush. He knew he must be brave, because he was dressed as a huntsman and beside him lay a terrible-looking gun.

The Cowardly Lion's heart began to thump like a triphammer, for he was much afraid of guns. But it did not seem at all fair to swallow a man in his sleep and, though he trembled so violently he could

scarcely stand, he determined to waken the huntsman and to ascertain at the same time whether he were brave enough for his purpose. Gathering himself together as best he could, he sprang upon the sleeping huntsman. There was a crackle and snap as if he had stepped upon a pillow stuffed with twigs. Then an ear splitting shriek flattened back the Cowardly Lion's ears and fairly curdled his blood. At the same time his tail was seized from behind, and twisted terrifically.

"Help! Help!" screamed the huntsman, trying to rise.

"Ouch, Stop!" roared the Cowardly Lion, while the person who had hold of his tail screamed in seven different keys. The Cowardly Lion removed his paw from the huntsman's chest. "Are you a brave man?" he asked in a quavering voice.

"Not very," chattered the huntsman, jumping up and backing cautiously toward a tree.

"Well, you don't sound brave," continued the lion in a relieved voice. "A brave man would not call for help. Let go of my tail, little boy. It's all a mistake. I don't want this huntsman after all."

"He's not a huntsman," wailed the little boy, running over and clasping the man around the knees.

"Not a huntsman?" roared the Cowardly Lion, waving his tail very fast. "Then what-"

"I'm a clown, you rude monster," spluttered the man indignantly.

A clown! Well, I should say-and none other than our old friend Notta Bit More. Snatching off his hat and false whiskers, he swung Bob Up into a tree and nimbly followed himself. When they were both seated on a branch, far above the ground, he looked anxiously through the leaves to see what the lion would do next. "Never saw such a country for lions!" he puffed resentfully. The lion, with one paw shading his eyes, was looking up at them. "Are you afraid?" he called pleasantly. "Are you afraid? Well, don't be, for being a coward myself makes me very sympathetic." At the word coward Notta almost fell from the tree.

"Bob," whispered the clown hoarsely, "it's the Cowardly Lion himself! Now we mustn't let him know we're going to capture him."

"He's a very bad lion," interrupted Bob Up tearfully. "He tried to bite you!"

"What say?" called the lion, who could only hear an indistinct muttering.

"He says you are a very bad lion," repeated Notta, looking seriously at the great creature below. "He's right," sighed the lion dolefully. "I am a bad lion. A good lion would have eaten you up by this time, but a bad lion often makes a good friend. Come on down. It was all a mistake."

"Are you a friend of Dorothy's?" asked Bob, leaning far out over the branch. At mention of Dorothy, the Cowardly Lion gave a guilty little jump.

"Well, I should say so. Are you friends of Dorothy's?"

"No, but we're from the same country," said the clown, "and if you're quite sure you don't want to eat me up, we'd like to ask you a few questions."

"I've never eaten a man in my life," roared the Cowardly Lion, rolling his eyes sadly.

"Then why start on me?" asked Notta, scratching his ear and winking at Bob Up. Now that the incident was over it struck him as terribly funny to be perched in a tree conversing with the Cowardly Lion. He wished some of his old pals in the circus could see him. He'd never expect them to believe it otherwise. So Notta and Bob climbed down and the three regarded each other with frank interest.

The Cowardly Lion had never seen a clown and the clown had never seen a Cowardly Lion, so there was much to be explained and accounted for. First, Notta told of their sudden transportation to Mudge, of Doorways, and everything else except Mustafa's determination to have them capture the Cowardly Lion himself. They were on their way, explained the clown, to the Emerald City to see whether or not Dorothy could find a way to send them back to the United States.

"Ozma can do that very easily with her magic belt," said the lion, "but I will go with you, for Oz is full of dangers for mortal folks like you, and Dorothy would not want anything to happen to anyone from her country, I am very sure. He then told them a lot about the marvelous land of Oz, with its four big countries and its many little ones.

"This," roared the Cowardly Lion with a sweep of his paw, "is the Munchkin Country. To the north is the Kingdom of the Gillikens, to the west is the Winkie Country and to the south the Quadling Country, ruled over by the good sorceress, Glinda. But all of Oz is under the rule of Ozma."

Bob's eyes grew rounder and rounder as he told them how Dorothy was first blown to Oz by a cyclone, of her discovery of the scarecrow, how she had lifted him down his pole and, with the Cowardly Lion and Tin Woodman, traveled to the Emerald City, then ruled over by the Wizard of Oz. Then he told how Ozma, the little fairy ruler, who was the real Queen of Oz, had been found and placed upon the throne. Then came the story of Scraps and Sir Hokus and of Tik Tok, and of every other amazing person living in the amazing Emerald City.

When the Cowardly Lion paused for breath Bob was jumping up and down with excitement.

"Oh, I do want to see Dorothy and the Scarecrow! Let's hurry," cried the little orphan, throwing his arms 'round the Cowardly Lion's neck. The kind old Cowardly Lion blinked with pleasure.

"I'm glad you did that," he rumbled in a husky voice, "for now I know that you trust me, and have forgotten all about that unfortunate mistake!"

"But why did you ask if I was brave?" mused the clown, who could scarcely believe that this merry little boy hugging the Cowardly Lion was the same Bobbie Downs who had fallen into Mudge.

"Because," the lion swallowed self-consciously, "because I am looking for the bravest man in Oz."

"What will you do when you find him?" asked Notta, carefully folding up his huntsman suit and powdering his nose with another marshmallow.

"Now, don't ask me that, please." The Cowardly Lion raised his paw pleadingly and looked so uncomfortable Notta dropped the subject at once. He felt a little uncomfortable himself, for he had determined, as soon as the opportunity presented itself, to tie up the great creature and somehow or other deliver him to Mustafa. What else could he do? The clown sighed regretfully, for already he had taken a great fancy to the Cowardly Lion. But fancy or not, one could not risk turning blue, and he had

Bob Up to think of. To gain the lion's confidence he decided to travel with him for a while toward the Emerald City and, so long as they did that with the fixed purpose of capturing the Cowardly Lion, Mustafa's ring could not turn black.

Notta said nothing of his plans to Bob, for the boy was so happy at the thought of visiting the Emerald City, and so delighted with his new and interesting friend, he hated to spoil a bit of his pleasure. So he merely opened another pack of Mustafa's sandwiches and they all had a cheerful breakfast together. Then, with Bob proudly riding the lion, they started off once again toward the north.

"Would you mind telling me why you pretended to be a huntsman?" asked the Cowardly Lion. He had been looking sideways at Notta for some time, trying to puzzle the thing out for himself. "Not at all," chuckled the clown, chinning himself on the branch of a tree. "I disguised myself as a huntsman to frighten off any wild animals while we were asleep. I always disguise myself when there is danger in the wind-don't I, Bobbie?" The little boy nodded his head solemnly.

"Does it help?" asked the Cowardly Lion in an interested voice. Bob Up looked thoughtful, but as the clown nodded emphatically, he said nothing. It seemed to Bob that Notta always picked the wrong disguise, but the clown was so confident and cheerful about it he could not bear to discourage him. So he listened politely while Notta explained his rules of disguise, politeness, joke and run. When he had finished the Cowardly Lion shook his head.

"I suppose," said he, half closing his eyes, "that you cannot help your disguises any more than I can help my cowardice."

"It isn't that I am afraid," explained Notta hastily, "but I can fight better when I'm not looking like myself. When I look like myself I feel funny and when I feel funny, I can't fight."

"Well, with me," said the Cowardly Lion, who like most of us enjoyed talking about himself, "the funnier I look, the harder I fight. So don't frighten me, I beg of you, for when I'm frightened I fight terrifically."

"I'll remember what you say," said Notta, turning a somersault, and wondering uneasily what the Cowardly Lion would do when he tried to capture him. But the thought of being captured never entered the lion's head. He was rather glad to have the two strangers turn up this way. It postponed that disagreeable business of eating a brave man. Of course, if they should run across one on the journey, well enough, but first it was his plain duty to conduct this clown and little boy safely to the Emerald City.

Notta was so cheerful and jolly and made so much fun out of everything that the Cowardly Lion felt repaid for any trouble he was taking and Bob Up had not been so happy since they had fallen into this bewildering country. Toward noon, as the sun grew rather hot, the Cowardly Lion turned into a small inviting wood which he felt was a short cut to the yellow brick road. But on the very first tree, a large sign made them pause. The sign said, "Twenty trees to U."

"I never heard of any country called U" mumbled the Cowardly Lion, blinking up at the sign in surprise.

"There was one just like this on the road we came down yesterday," said Notta. "Bob and I wondered what it stood for."

"Well, I don't know," mused the lion. "That's the queer thing about Oz. Even old residents like myself are often amazed to find new countries and peoples where we never expected to find them."

According to the maps there are only scattered farms between here and the Emerald City. But so long as we have to go through this wood, we might as well see what U stands for."

Bob was the first to discover that every now and then the trees were numbered and, following them in the order of their numbers, took them deeper and deeper into the forest. When they reached the tree numbered nine-teen, they were alarmed to note that all the other numbers that had guided them had disappeared. The wood had meanwhile grown so dense that they could hardly push on and, when Notta suggested that they go back, they found they had lost the way entirely. The Cowardly Lion was full of stickers and thorns and, while Bob picked them out of his woolly mane, the clown climbed the nineteenth tree to make a little survey of the country.

With a shout he came scrambling down. "There's a clearing just beyond, and I think I made out twenty on the tree in the center," puffed Notta. "Come on!" The clown was growing more interested in this strange country every minute. He could hardly wait to see what was going to happen next.

"Let me go first. My hide doesn't tear as easily as yours," said the Cowardly Lion, and he began pushing through the heavy thicket in the direction pointed out by Notta. Holding up their arms to protect their faces, the others followed and in almost no time had come out on a small clearing. As they looked the clown clutched Bob, while the Cowardly Lion blinked with astonishment. The twentieth tree was knitting furiously, holding in its long fingers nearly a hundred gleaming needles, and bending its witchy head every once in a while to examine the great, cloudy net that flowed all around it. For some moments they watched in puzzled silence. Then Bob screamed, the Cowardly Lion roared and Notta gasped with alarm. For the net suddenly swooped down and scooped them up like a school of fish. The tree gave a disagreeable little laugh, quickly knitted the top of the net together and, lifting all its branches at once, tossed the luckless travelers high over its head.

Miraculously, as it struck the air, the big porous bag filled out like a balloon and went sailing upward at a terrible rate-the Cowardly Lion, Bob Up and Notta rolling over and over in the bottom and bumping and banging together in a most painful and unpleasant fashion.

CHAPTER 10 On the Isle of Un

If You could just stop trembling," puffed the clown, trying to keep out of the Cowardly Lion's way, "I think it would help."

"But how can I stop trembling when I am so frightened," complained the lion, clutching the swaying net with all four paws.

"I'm frightened too!" wailed Bob, who was rolling and bouncing first against one, then against the other.

"It seems to me you're shaking about a lot yourself," said the Cowardly Lion reproachfully, as Notta dove suddenly into his ribs. "What are you trying to do?"

"My disguise!" panted the clown, clutching at his chest. "If I could only put on my disguise."

"Aho!" mumbled the Cowardly Lion, and stopped trembling long enough to grin. But just then

the balloon calmed down, and changing its course sailed gently and levelly through the sky, so that the three huddled together in the bottom were fairly comfortable.

"I guess U stands for Up. You surely bobbed up this time, didn't you?" Notta winked merrily at the little orphan, and then peered curiously through the holes in the net. "This reminds me of a balloon trip I once made for the circus. Wonder where we'll land?"

"Are we to land at all?" sighed the Cowardly Lion unhappily. Two of his legs had slipped through holes in the net and he was feeling uneasy and uncomfortable. "Climb on me, Bob, my boy. It will be a little softer. When you've been in Oz as long as I have, you'll take nothing for granted." He looked mournfully at the clown who was that moment below him.

"Then I'll just take it Oz is," laughed Notta. "Why, here's land now! And we're slowing down." So they were, down down down, until they were over a rocky island. When the net was almost resting on a little green hill, it turned completely and suddenly upside down, and shook them out with such violence that they rolled all the way to the bottom. The Cowardly Lion jumped up first and hurriedly placed himself in front of Bob. Though he was trembling even more than usual, he knew that he was a better fighter than these helpless mortals. And that there would be fighting he felt reasonably sure, for a great crowd was coming noisily toward them.

Notta nervously jerked Bob to his feet and stood beside the Cowardly Lion. There was no time for disguising. "We'll just start with rule two," panted the clown, running his finger hurriedly 'round his collar. "Let's be ex-tre-eemly polite. That's the way to meet strangers."

"All right," agreed the Cowardly Lion in a rather choked voice, "you meet 'em with politeness, and if that fails, I'll meet 'em with something else." He gnashed his teeth to keep them from chattering. As the first of the company reached the foot of the hill Bob gave a little scream, but Notta calmly stepped forward.

"Ladies and gentlemen!" began the clown in his best circus manner, "Let me introduce you to the most famous lion in the world, the Cowardly Lion of Oz, as brave as he is cowardly; allow me to present Bob Up, the brightest little boy in the United States, and myself, a harmless clown whose tricks have astonished the crowned heads of two continents. Ladies and gentlemen, let-"

"Two creatures and a beast," called the leader of the company, interrupting Notta in the middle of a sentence. "Two creatures and a beast," repeated the others, staring dully at the newcomers. The Cowardly Lion growled threateningly at this and Notta began running over all the jokes that he knew. As for Bob, he was too amazed to do anything but stare, for these were certainly the most curious beings he had ever seen in his life.

To begin with, they had feathers instead of hair. These feathers were small and fine and grew smoothly back from their foreheads, becoming longer at the back and curling softly behind the ears. Their eyes were perfectly round and their noses almost like bird beaks. Otherwise they were the same as regular folks, except in their manner of walking, for their feet turned in so much that they had to hop, putting one foot down and then hopping over it. Before Notta could start a joke, the leader of these singular creatures motioned to two behind him. They immediately stepped forward, unfurling as they did so a large banner.

"Unwelcome to Un," said the banner in crooked yellow letters.

"No use being polite then," rumbled the Cowardly Lion and, taking matters into his own paws,

he gave such a thundering roar that the very ground trembled.

"Ginger poppa!" gasped the clown, almost as frightened as the Featherheads. The effect on the crowd was simply breath-taking. Beginning at the back of their necks, their feathers slowly rose straight on end until each head looked like a huge and quivering feather duster. The Cowardly Lion tried to roar again, but the best that he could manage was a chuckle. Notta took one look, then fell up against a tree and laughed until the tears rolled down his cheeks. Even Bob giggled. "Try 'em again," wheezed the Cowardly Lion. "I think they'll listen to you now." Wiping his eyes on his sleeve, Notta stepped forward and addressed the leader.

"Could you tell us a little about this interesting country of yours, and the quickest way out of it?" he inquired politely. Slowly the feathers on the heads of the crowd began to settle.

"Taint a country, it's a skyle," answered the Featherhead, blinking rapidly.

"A skyle?" repeated the clown, glancing doubtfully at the Cowardly Lion, who appeared to be as puzzled as he was. "What is a skyle?" asked Notta curiously.

"This is," snapped the leader disagreeably. "You're as ignorant as a fish, aren't you?" Then as the Cowardly Lion gave a threatening growl he continued grudgingly, "A skyle is an isle in the sky, and anyone who has studied skyography ought to know that. I suppose you don't even know what an isle is?" He looked contemptuously at the three strangers.

"I do. An isle is a small body of land entirely surrounded by water," cried Bob, delighted to find that geography was of some use after all.

"Well," said the Featherhead uneasily, "then I guess you'll understand when I tell you that a skyle is a small body of land entirely surrounded by air."

"Air!" spluttered Notta. "I say, how does one get off a skyle?"

"You'll soon find that out!" muttered the Featherhead, and all the others began nodding and clucking for all the world like a company of hens.

"What do you call yourselves?" asked the Cowardly Lion. Now that he knew how to frighten them, he no longer felt afraid.

"We're Uns, we are, and nobody but Uns are allowed on this skyle. We'll have to take you along to the palace and his royal Skyness will decide what's to be done with you."

"Another king," groaned the clown.

"Isn't it time to run?" asked Bob, tugging at Notta's pantaloons, for the Uns were drawing closer this time, paying no attention to the roars of the Cowardly Lion.

"No use running, Bob. We might fall off. Perhaps this King is a better fellow than his subjects.

"Take us to your King!" cried the clown, settling his cap determinedly. Hopping and muttering, the Uns formed two crooked lines, and with the three travelers in the center marched away to the palace. There were many tall trees on the skyle of Un and, more remarkable still, every tree had a rough boxlike structure built in its branches, like enormous bird houses. They were reached by rough ladders and the

Uns seemed to be as much at home on the branches as on the ground.

Some of the women standing on lower branches were hanging clothes on upper ones as calmly as ordinary folk string the washing up in the yard. But, as Notta whispered to Bob, what could one expect of Featherheads?

The sky itself was rocky and barren and there seemed to be no farms, buildings nor industries of any kind. "What do you do here for a living?" asked Notta, turning to the Un beside him.

"Fish, mostly," said the Un.

"What for?" asked the Cowardly Lion, treading on Notta's heels in his eagerness to hear.

"Birds," sniffed the Un, looking over his shoulder scornfully. "What did you think we'd fish for?"

"Oh, but you couldn't fish for birds," objected Bob Up, stopping short, while Notta burst into a loud roar of laughter. The Un glared at all three.

"The air's full of 'em," he announced sharply, and then, as the clown continued to laugh immoderately, his feathers began to ruffle with rage.

"You're idiots!" he screamed, thrusting his sharp beak almost in Notta's face. "Idiots!" echoed all the other Uns immediately. Several trod on the clown's toes and, seeing that Bob was rather pale, Notta hastily changed the subject. Not long after that they came to the palace. To Bob it looked like a huge barn stuck between four trees. It was about ten feet from the ground and from the top of each tree fluttered a bright yellow flag bearing the word, UN.

The Cowardly Lion trembled a good deal as they went up the rickety green ladder, but with a little help from Notta he managed it, and next instant they were in the presence of the King. "Two creatures and a beast, your Skyness!" announced the leader of the delegation. Then stepping close to Notta he shouted at the top of his voice, "His Majesty, I-wish-I-was, King of Un!" Notta's cap fell off and he clapped his hand to his ear. The Cowardly Lion made a little spring at the Un and had the pleasure of seeing the King's feathers rise erect upon his head and wave to and fro.

"Approach, creatures and beast," commanded I-wish-I-was in a slightly shaky voice. He was sitting on a high wooden perch, swinging his feet. Grouped about him were a number of Uns in bright green uniforms that exactly matched their feather hair. Notta made a deep bow and Bob and the Cowardly Lion moved forward together.

"How did you come to come here?" asked I-wish-I-was, adjusting a pair of spectacles on his terrible beak.

"We didn't come to come at all," said Notta hastily. "We were standing under a tree, watching it knit-a very strange sight, your Skyness will agree."

"Why shouldn't it knit?" snapped the King impatiently. "There's no law against it, is there? In fact, if it were not for that tree, we'd be in a pretty state for fishing nets."

"Well, we were caught in the tree's net, the net flew up and here we are," finished Notta, determined not to quarrel if he could help it.

"A mighty poor catch, I call you," muttered the King complainingly. He turned to his guard to see whether they agreed with him and they all nodded so hard it made Bob dizzy.

"Are you willing to become Uns?" he asked gloomily.

"I'll not grow feathers for anybody," growled the Cowardly Lion, shaking his paw at I-wish-I-was.

"Wait till you've tried," answered the King loftily. "But what I mean is this: Each of you must do something unish, for we are all Uns here. I'm unfair any Un will tell you that. Bill, there," he pointed proudly at the commander of the Guard, "Bill, he's ungrateful." Then he waved to the Un beside him. "And Tom's unkind. See what I mean? We're all Uns together." The King rubbed his clawlike hands gleefully.

"But I never heard of such a place!" gasped Notta.

"Of course not! Un's positively unheard of," confided the King, smoothing back his feathers complacently. Bob's eyes grew rounder and rounder, Notta swallowed, and the Cowardly Lion tilted one ear forward to be sure he was hearing aright.

"Why, you're Uns already," said I-wish-I-was, with a mean little chuckle.

"You," he pointed his long thin finger at Notta, "are unnatural. You," he pointed to the Cowardly Lion, "are unpleasant. And you," he wiggled his finger teasingly at Bob, "you're uninteresting!"

"Thanks!" said the clown, taking off his cap. "And besides that," cried I-wish-I-was, his voice rising to a shrill squeak, "you're all uninvited."

"And bound to be unlucky," gurgled Bill of the Guard.

"And terribly unhappy," squealed another, dancing up and down.

"And terrifically uncomfortable," added a third. Hereupon the Uns began hopping frantically about, each shouting something unish, till Bob covered his ears and the Cowardly Lion began to lash his tail with fury.

"Stop! Stop!" shouted the clown, stamping his foot. "I believe this is the unpleasantest island I've ever been on." Loud cheers from the Uns interrupted him here. "And if you will tell us the way off we'll go at once.

I-wish-I-was raised his claw for silence, pulled a pad from his pocket, a long feather quill from his head and, dipping it in ink, wrote something in a great hurry. This he handed to the Commander of the Guard and Notta looking over his shoulder read, "Push them off at the first opportunity." The Guard, not knowing that the clown had read the message, bowed and began whispering to his comrades, while Notta scratched his ear and wondered what he should do.

"Could your Skyness give us a bite to eat?" he asked presently. That, he reflected, would give him time to think.

"Certainly not," answered the King, snapping his birdlike eyes. "If you're hungry, go fish, the

same as the rest of us do. Bill, give them some rods." He winked wickedly at the green guardsman. Notta saw him make a little push in the air. Bill with a chuckle winked back; then brought three rods and reels and handed them to the clown.

"Oh!" cried Bob Up, "I'd love to go fishing."

"Where do you fish around here?" asked Notta, wrinkling up his forehead.

"Just go to the edge of the skyle and drop your line over," said the King, and nudged the Un nearest him. At this all the Uns began nudging and winking first one eye and then the other. "Come on," whispered Notta and, tucking the rods under his arm, ran toward the door. The Cowardly Lion, in his haste to follow, fell all the way down the ladder, but at a quick word from Notta jumped up, and as Bob joined them they all started on a run for a little clump of trees. "I tell you," puffed the clown, pausing at length to mop his brow, "they are bad Uns, sure enough. They mean to push us off the skyle. That's why they sent us fishing."

"Just let 'em try it!" roared the Cowardly Lion, shaking his mane. He had skinned his knees in his fall down the ladder and was feeling quite ready for a battle.

"But shall we go fishing or not?" asked the clown uncertainly. Bob Up said nothing, but he looked wistfully at the fishing rods. Bob had never been fishing in his life, and even the thought of being pushed off the skyle did not seem as dreadful as being deprived of this pleasure. Notta saw the look.

"I'm hungry as a lion," said the clown suddenly, "and we've lost Mustafa's packets somewhere between Oz and Un."

"Well, you're not as hungry as this lion," rumbled the Cowardly Lion, with a wink at Bob. "It must be long past noon. Let's risk it. You fish and I'll watch, and if any of these Uns start pushing us-." The Cowardly Lion gave a roar and shook his paws threateningly at the palace of I-wish-I-was.

CHAPTER 11 A Strange Fishing Party

To their surprise, none of the Uns followed them, and in about an hour they had come to the edge of the skyle. The Cowardly Lion shuddered as he looked down into the clear blue air, and even Notta had a queer feeling in the pit of his stomach as the white clouds went rolling and tumbling past them.

"Do you think we'll catch any birds, Notta?" asked Bob Up, venturing so near the edge that the Cowardly Lion gave a roar of terror. "Remember you're not a bird," he warned.

"I'll fix him," said Notta. Cutting the line from one of the rods he doubled it many times and fastened Bob securely to the tree. With what was left, he made a safety belt for himself. Then, while the Cowardly Lion shivered with fright, they sat upon the edge of the skyle and cast their lines far into the air below. "Now, Bob my lad, don't expect a bite too soon," said the clown, "for fishing is a mortal slow business, but a fine one for thinking, and all of us must think of a way to get off this island before we're pushed off by the Uns."

The Cowardly Lion, with his back to the two fishermen, kept a sharp lookout for the enemy, and all three tried to think. But thinking when you're hungry is hard work. Besides, there were so many things to distract one's attention. The sky, as the afternoon advanced, turned a soft and dreamy pink, and the clouds drifting by were of every shape and color imaginable-green, purple, amber and gold-and of such marvelous form that each seemed lovelier than the last. There were castles and tall masted ships, there were caravans and chariots, and once a white and wonderful Princess waved to the little boy from the back of a feathery swan. So it was small wonder Notta and Bob forgot the Uns, and even their fishing lines, blowing gently to and fro in the soft pink air waves. Then, all at once, Bob's line gave a jerk and had he not been tied to the tree he would certainly have been pulled off the skyle.

"Oh! Oh!" screamed the little boy in delight, "I've caught something!"

Giving his rod to the Cowardly Lion, who was blinking dreamily at a wonderful cloud city, the clown ran to help Bob, and hand over hand they pulled up the line. What do you suppose was on it? A goose-a simply enormous goose. It was smoking gently as they drew it over the edge.

"Why, it's cooked!" marveled Notta, unfastening the line which had caught in the bird's legs. And so it was cooked in all its feathers with its head tucked under its wing.

"Aha, so our goose is cooked, is it?" observed the Cowardly Lion, sniffing the air hungrily.

"Must have flown too near the sun.

"Well," chuckled Notta, "that I don't pretend to know. Fishing for birds is strange enough, but catching a cooked goose is almost too good to be true."

"But it is true," exulted Bob, clapping his hands, "and I caught it!" While the Cowardly Lion watched the two rods, and Bob proudly picked his goose, Notta ran off in search of water. In a few minutes he came running back with a bucket full which he had drawn from a small sky well. The bucket, one of the canvas collapsible kind used in circuses, the clown had fortunately stowed under his capacious belt. As neither meat nor drink was now lacking, they sat down under a small tree and dined quite merrily. The Cowardly Lion ate one half the goose, bones and all, and Notta and Bob finished off the rest.

"It looks," and the clown, rising to take a drink of water out of the bucket, which he hung on a branch of the tree, "it looks as if the Uns had forgotten us.

"Maybe," mused the lion, shaking his mane, "but we mustn't forget them. Have you thought of anything yet?"

"Not a thing," confessed the clown cheerfully. He turned a dozen cartwheels, walked a few paces on his hands, and ended up with a somersault over Bob. "You're a spry one," said the Cowardly Lion admiringly, as the clown sat down with his back against a tree, as spry a one as I've ever met."

"Thank you," laughed Notta. "If thinking came as easily as cartwheeling we'd be off this skyle in no time. But now that we're fed and comfortable, suppose we think again."

"I'd rather fish," said Bob Up promptly.

"Can't we fish a little longer, Notta?"

"Well, there's no harm in it," replied the clown, winking at the Cowardly Lion, "and as we'll probably have to spend the night here we may as well catch something for breakfast."

"Try to catch me something uncooked this time, won't you?" asked the Cowardly Lion, thumping his tail lazily on the ground. "You know I prefer my food uncooked." Bob smiled a little at this and, moving his rod gently to and fro, thought about the comical adventures he was having. Notta, with his back to the tree, was fishing too, and everything was very quiet. All around them the light was fading, and the clouds turned from pink to a dull gray and rushed past with an angry sort of sighing. Night was coming on, and soon the stars began to twinkle above and below the little skyland. Bob had never seen stars so large nor so bright, but then Bob had never been so close to them before. He was thinking rather solemnly that it would be fun to catch a star, when Notta, oppressed by the silence, burst into a merry song:

"A little chocolate cooky man Went calling on a plate. She said, 'Sir, it is ten o'clock! Why do you come so late?'"

"Because I'm made that way," said he, "My little china girly, I'm always choco-late, you see, So how could I come early?"

"And is it not, my darling, Better chocolate than never?" The wee plate cracked a little smile. 'Oh, sir,' said she, 'you're clever!'"

"And you may call to-morrow-Even though you're choco-late!" But pshaw! He never came, because That cooky man was ate!"

Bob laughed right out loud, and Notta, who had been trying to make Bob merry, tossed his cap triumphantly into the air.

"Very good," murmured the Cowardly Lion, waving his tail gently, "except that last line. 'Was ate.' Isn't that a bit ungrammatical, even for Oz?"

"There you go getting unish," teased Notta. "I guess I can be ungrammatical in Un."

"Notta! Notta! I've got another bite," screamed Bob, hopping about on one foot. That finished the argument.

"Hope it's a bite for me," said the Cowardly Lion. Then he gave a little roar of surprise, for over the edge of the sky came a dog-as dear and shaggy a little bow-wow as had ever barked at an ice man. The hook had caught neatly in its collar and, though it was a little out of breath, it was otherwise unhurt.

"Well," rumbled the Cowardly Lion, rising on his haunches, "so this is breakfast? Bob, what do you mean by catching a dog for my breakfast?"

"Oh, please," whimpered the dog, rolling its soft eyes in terror. "You wouldn't eat a little fellow who was only out for a walk, would you?" He sat up and begged so prettily Bob caught him up in his arms and hugged him. "Oh, Notta, may I keep him? I've never had a dog!"

"Well, now," said the clown, scratching his ear, "I don't see why not."

"Don't keep me," wailed the dog piteously, "for I belong to a little boy on another star, and he

would miss me very much."

"What kind of a dog are you?" gasped the clown, staring at the little creature. "What do you mean by taking a walk through the sky, and living on a star?"

"I am a skye terrier," answered the little dog, looking anxiously from one to the other. "You wouldn't hurt a little fellow like me, would you?"

"But how will you get home?" asked Notta.

"Just throw me back into the air," barked the dog, and licked Bob on the nose so coaxingly he couldn't bear to refuse, though his heart was heavy at the thought of losing him.

"I guess that other little boy would miss you, sighed Bob. So, kissing the shaggy little terrier right on the nose, he dropped him gently over the edge of the skyle, and as they watched he scampered hurriedly over a cloud and then along through the sky, as easily as if he had been on land instead of air. He paused once and looked over his shoulder, then with a joyful bark and wave of his tail ran off, vanishing like a speck in the distance. Notta, seeing that Bob was downhearted at losing the little fellow, suggested that they start fishing again. "Who knows what we may catch this time?" exclaimed the clown, pushing back his cap, and snapping his line energetically.

Almost at once both lines became taut, and when they were drawn up, two shiny silver packages fell from the slender hooks. "Dreams for a little boy," said a small label on Bob's package. "Dreams for a big boy," said the label on Notta's package. With trembling fingers they untied the silver ribbons, and had no sooner done so than Bob drooped gently against Notta, and the clown fell back against a tree. In another second both were fast asleep-dreaming the lovely stories they had caught in the sky. It happened so quickly that the Cowardly Lion was completely taken by surprise. He sniffed the silver papers. "Dreams," read the Cowardly Lion by the light of the stars. "Well, I guess they're regular sleeping powders. It's a good thing I didn't catch a dream, for somebody must stay awake and keep guard." The big beast yawned and stretched, then carefully dragging Bob and Notta back from the edge of the skyle, set himself to keep the watch while they slept. He was terribly sleepy himself and keeping awake was a hard fight, but the Cowardly Lion knew that the lives of these two mortals depended upon him so he walked up and down, and down and up the edge of the Skyland, and presently he heard a sound that made him quake with terror. Footsteps in the woods! Hundreds of them coming nearer every minute!

"The Uns," choked the Cowardly Lion, and hesitated between waking Notta and Bob, or advancing to meet the enemy. Before he could make up his mind, a whole party, their feathers gleaming strangely in the moonlight, burst out of the trees.

"Push 'em off! Shove 'em off!" screamed the leader, waving on the rest. It was I-wish-I-was, and in little hops and springs they came tumbling toward him.

With a roar that sounded more terrible than anything you could imagine, because it was mostly made up of terror, the Cowardly Lion sprang straight at them. Down went I-wish-I-was and a dozen of his warriors. Shaking and quaking with fear, the Cowardly Lion made quick springs and snatches, and when the Uns with little screams of rage, drew back, his mouth was full of feathers. But they were far from giving up and after a brief parley came on again. Once more the Cowardly Lion struck out, left and right. This time two dozen more were down, but the Cowardly Lion was slowly being forced toward Notta and Bob, and the treacherous edge of the Skyle.

Armed with feathered sticks and screaming horribly, the Uns came on a third time, and though the Cowardly Lion fought them with might, mane, claw, tooth and nail, he was almost smothered by the attack. Something of the alarm made the clown stir in his sleep, and the triumphant shout of I-wish-I-was brought him wide awake. He sat up just in time to see the Cowardly Lion go down under a perfect wave of Uns.

"Help! Help!" screamed Notta, but there was no one to help them. He made a little dash to the left, but the line that tied him to the tree caught him with a jerk. He made a little dash to the right, spun around and clasped his stomach in despair. Just then the Cowardly Lion, growling like a whole menagerie, shook off the mass of Uns and bounded to his side. Feathers were strewn in every direction, and a hundred of the Uns lay where they had fallen.

The poor Cowardly Lion was shaking with exhaustion and fright, but never thought of giving up, and when the Uns made another rush, he met them as valiantly as ever. Wild screams from the Featherheads in the rear made him pause and look over in alarm at Notta. The clown, with staring eyes, was mumbling continuously under his breath, and touching first one and then another of the crowd swarming around him, and each time he touched an Un, the Un disappeared.

The Cowardly Lion stopped fighting and sat down with a thud. The Uns stopped fighting, and those in front began to tread on the toes of the ones in back, in their anxiety to get away. When twenty had vanished in as many seconds, the rest ran howling to the woods.

"Well," panted the Cowardly Lion, rolling his eyes wildly at Notta.

"You saved my life, old fellow," cried the clown, giving him an impulsive hug.

"And you saved mine," gasped the lion, as soon as he had breath enough to gasp. "But how did you do it and where are they?"

"In Mudge," explained the clown, drawing his knees up to his chin and winking at the Cowardly Lion, "in Mudge and scaring the life out of Mustafa, I'll wager. Remember the magic verse that brought us here? Well, every time an Un came near I said:

"Udge! Budge! Go to Mudge! Udger budger, You're a Mudger!"

"Marvelous!" sighed the Cowardly Lion. "But how did you think of it so quick?"

"I had to," replied Notta modestly. "You see, when there's nothing else to do I think, and not thinking very often makes me do it rather well. But do you suppose the other Uns will come back?"

The Cowardly Lion shook his head. "Not in an 'undred years," he yawned. "And now that they are good and frightened let's all get some sleep."

The Cowardly Lion was bruised and ruffled, and so tired he could not keep his eyes open another minute. Stretching himself beside Bob, who had not even heard the battle, he fell instantly into a heavy slumber. Notta, lying on the other side of the little boy, was soon enjoying the rest of the dreams in his silver package.

Towards morning faint cries aroused the Cowardly Lion. Though only half awake he sprang up blinking his eyes nervously. Then he gave a howl of dismay, for Notta and Bob were nowhere to be seen!

CHAPTER 12 Saved by a Flyaboutabus

GROANING because he had been foolish enough to trust the Uns, the Cowardly Lion ran up and down the edge of the skyle. There was no doubt about it, Bob and Notta had been pushed off while he was asleep. Then a tree, jutting far over the edge, attracted his attention. It was swaying and trembling in a most unusual fashion. At the same time the faint cries that had awakened him were repeated. With a frightened gulp, the lion saw the two fishing lines tied to the tree and, winding his tail firmly around the slim trunk, began pulling up the first of the lines. It was hard work and two or three times he was almost drawn over the edge, but he never hesitated, and presently he had dragged Notta safely back to land. The clown waved his hands feebly, then lay on his stomach and panted like a fish. Without waiting to restore him, the Cowardly Lion began to pull up the other line, and presently Bob, also breathless and panting, lay beside the clown. They were not only breathless, but quite wet-having fallen into a cloud. The lion, puffing a little himself, watched anxiously. Notta, with a long and final gasp, sat up and gave a little sigh of relief.

"That makes the second time you've saved my life," said Notta faintly.

"What happened?" asked the Cowardly Lion.

"Well, first," said the clown, talking in little jerks and pausing every few minutes to pat Bob on the back, "first, I fell asleep, then, I fell awake. And if it hadn't been for these disguises I should have been cut in two."

"The Uns?" asked the lion, opening his eyes very wide.

"Yes," said Notta, and told how the Featherheads had pushed both Bob and himself from the skyle and, without stopping to notice that they were tied or to touch the Cowardly Lion, had run off without making a sound. "It was a mighty good thing we were anchored, eh, Bob, my boy? Feel better?"

Bob shook his head uncertainly, for he was still frightened and dizzy from swinging through the air.

The stars had faded out and the sun had not yet risen and in the cold gray mist of early morning the three huddled together and tried to think what to do.

"First, let's get away from the edge," shuddered the Cowardly Lion. Cutting the fishing lines that had saved their lives, Notta set Bob on the Cowardly Lion's back and they moved slowly in the half darkness toward the center of the skyle. The Uns evidently had gone off to their homes, and with some matches Notta had tucked under his wonderful belt they kindled a little fire and soon were dry and much more cheerful. Bob immediately went to sleep, but Notta and the Cowardly Lion kept watch.

For an hour there was not a sound. Then the noise of someone sawing wood came distinctly through the still air. Leaving the Cowardly Lion on guard, Notta went to investigate. He tiptoed along quietly, resolved if it were an Un to wish him away to Mudge. As he advanced the sawing grew louder and louder and, peering around a large tree, he saw a huge and ridiculous bird flopped over against a rock, snoring at a great rate.

As Notta looked the bird opened one eye, stamped its big claws fretfully, and immediately fell to snoring again. The clown took off his cap, scratched his ear and then burst into a loud peal of laughter, which he could not have helped had he died the next minute. The bird stopped snoring instantly, and opened both eyes.

"What do you mean by waking me when I was sound asleep, " it chirped crossly. "A great many sounds of sleep," corrected Notta, winking at the singular creature. "I thought someone was sawing down a tree."

"Did you?" The bird looked rather proud and began to puff out its feathers. "I'm the loudest snorer in the sky," it announced, strutting about self-consciously. "That's why my beak curls in this convenient fashion."

It was the bird's beak that had made Notta laugh in the first place. It was long and blue, and curved so that it could fit over the comical creature's ear like a personal telephone connection. "But why does it curl?" asked Notta, sitting down and staring at the bird intently.

"So I can hear myself snore, replied the bird. "As soon as I snore in my own ear I wake up and stop snoring." With its claw the Snorer adjusted its beak, much as one would adjust a pair of spectacles, and looked blandly at Notta. "I'm unusual don't you think?"

"Unusual," whistled the Clown. "I'll say you are! And never have I seen such a country. Why, if I could take along a few of these freaks, I'd have the finest show on earth." He rubbed his forehead thoughtfully as he thought of the Mudgers, the Half-Lion, and now this bewildering bird.

Snorer was about the size of a small child, with enormous feet, short legs and pink feathers. His head was somewhat like that of a large crane, and his eyes were as blue as his beak.

"Why are you on the Isle of Un?" asked Notta, as the creature continued to look solemnly at him. "Because I'm unusual," said the bird with a triumphant little hop. "But why are you here?"

"Because I'm unlucky, I guess," sighed the clown ruefully. "Won't you come along and meet my friends?"

"Yes, I'll come with you," said the bird calmly. It put its head on one side and looked at Notta. "You're beautiful," it sighed tremulously, "beautifully beautiful. I love you!"

Notta had all he could do to keep from laughing, but seeing that Snorer was really in earnest, he patted it awkwardly on the head, and started back, the bird hopping happily beside him.

"What's this you've caught?" asked the Cowardly Lion, blinking suspiciously at Notta's odd companion. As for Bob, who had wakened a moment before, he gave a little shout of laughter. "It's because I'm so unusual," whispered Snorer, putting up a claw and winking at Notta. "Tell them my name's Nickadoodle."

So Notta gravely introduced Nick to Bob and the Cowardly Lion and, after Nick carefully explained his queer telephone nose, the four regarded one another with deep interest. "Maybe you can tell us the way to escape from Un," suggested the Cowardly Lion in a rather choked voice, for every time he looked at Nick, he felt like roaring. Before Snorer could answer, Bob, who had been staring fixedly at the Cowardly Lion, burst out laughing.

"What's the matter?" demanded the Cowardly Lion gruffly.

"What's the matter?" asked Notta. Then he too clapped his hand to his mouth and began to rock backward and forward. "Feathers!" gasped the clown, "You've a big bunch of blue feathers in your mane!"

"What?" roared the Cowardly Lion, angrily putting his paw to his head.

"Oh, everyone grows feathers in Un," chirped Nick cheerily, hopping toward Bob. "Take off your cap and see."

Snatching off his hat Bob ran his fingers hastily through his hair. Horrors! Right at the crown of his head were at least ten stiff red feathers. Notta had as many green ones, but his hung down over his right eye when he took off his cap. The desire to laugh at Snorer suddenly left them. To laugh at someone who was funny was one thing, but to be funny yourself-well, that was different! head on one side. "I think they're quite becoming!"

"Becoming!" screamed the Cowardly Lion. "Well, they'll be coming out by the roots. It's bad enough to be chicken hearted, but being feathered headed, I simply will not stand!" He gave the bunch of feathers a furious tweak, but he might as well have tried to pull off his ears.

"We've got to get off this skyland," blustered the poor lion, stamping around in a fury. "I'll jump off before I grow another feather." Bob was thinking that his would come in mighty handy for playing Indian.

"I suppose we'll soon grow enough to fly off," said Notta, blowing the green feathers out of his eye and pushing them back under his cap. "I say, Nickadoodle, can't you tell us a way out of this?"

"I'll tell you one thing," murmured the great bird, nestling close to Notta. "You're beautiful, beauti-ful!" He rolled his eyes rapturously.

"Well, if you don't want my beauty broken to pieces tell us a way to escape, begged the clown, looking nervously toward the edge of the skyland.

"There's only one way for you to leave," said Snorer, "and that is in the royal Flyaboutabus."

"What is it?" choked Notta.

"Where is it?" roared the Cowardly Lion.

"Tied to a tree near the palace. But we'll have to wait till the Uns go to wish," replied Nick, rubbing his head against Notta's knee. And while the three listened in amazement Snorer told them a bit about life on the Isle of Un. No one on Un, explained Nick gravely, ever worked, but each morning they went regularly to wish, and nothing was allowed to interrupt their wishing. For three hours they shouted their wishes as loudly as they could, and I-wish-I-was, because he could wish faster and shout louder than any of the rest, had been made king.

"You'll hear them at it soon," said Snorer, adjusting his nose, "and that's the best time for you to leave. Afternoons they fish and evenings they fight. Wish, fish and fight-that's the program here."

"But how do they get anything done?" asked Notta, standing on his head to settle his feathers.

"They don't," replied Snorer calmly. "Everything is undone; and about your feathers," he pointed his claw at the Cowardly Lion's mane, "every time anything unish happens to you you'll grow another. First you were unwise to come here. That accounts for one; then you were uncomfortable and unsafe."

"Unlucky, unhappy and unfed!" spluttered the clown, turning a somersault with each word. "Lead us to the Flyaboutabus, old fellow, or we'll soon be as feathered as geese."

"All right," chirped Nickadoodle obligingly, "but step softly and do just as I tell you."

"Aren't there any good Uns?" asked Bob with a little sigh.

"Well, there was one," Nick paused to adjust his nose, which was continually falling off its hook, "but I've forgotten his name, and the others treated him so unkindly that he's hidden himself in some cave somewhere on the skyle. But they do say if he ever becomes king, the Uns will all have to reform."

Bob was hungry and far from rested, but as he stumbled along the rocky beach he fell to thinking about this good Un and wishing he might see him before they left the skyland. But Notta was so cheered at the thought of leaving Un that every few seconds he sprang into the air or somersaulted over the Cowardly Lion. The Cowardly Lion was dreadfully down-hearted. The feathers preyed on his mind, his ears dropped and his tail dragged and nothing Notta could say made him feel any better.

"It's all very well for you and Bob. You can wear hats and hide your feathers, but a lion in a hat would look as ridiculous as a lion with feathers. I shall be the laughing stock of Oz," groaned the poor beast.

"Well, it's not so bad to make people laugh," comforted Notta. "That is my business, and I know. Come with me to America and your fortune will be made." But the Cowardly Lion only shook his head and padded sadly over the rough stones.

"This is a punishment," thought the poor lion, "a punishment for my wickedness in planning to devour a brave man." And perhaps he was right.

By this time they were so near the palace that Nick held up his claw for silence. Hiding behind a huge rock, they watched the Uns climb down from their tree houses and hurry off to wish, just as sensible folk hurry off to work. "Too bad I didn't send I-wish-I-was to Mudge," whispered Notta. "Hush," said Nickadoodle. "As soon as you hear an earfull of noise run for that third juniper tree." He pointed out the tree with his claw and the three watchers waited anxiously for the signal. Soon there was not an Un in sight and a second later a perfect explosion of screeches rent the air. It was, as Notta explained afterward, an elephant earfull of noise, for every Un on the skyle was wishing at the top of his lungs.

As soon as they had recovered from the first shock, Notta, Bob and the Cowardly Lion rushed toward the juniper tree. Nick had flown ahead and was already calling down directions when they reached it.

From the top branch of the juniper tree the king's feathery Flyaboutabus was tugging merrily at its rope. Following Nick's instructions, Notta climbed to the top of the tree and, hanging on to the rope, managed to bring it down a bit. Nick, bidding Bob catch him around the neck, flew up next, and their

weight brought it down still further. It was still terribly high for the Cowardly Lion, who could not very well climb the tree.

"Hurry! Hurry!" croaked Nick, flapping his wings warningly. "There's an Un." And sure enough, a tardy Featherhead was staring at them in astonishment from the door of his tree house. With an ear splitting squall, he fell down the ladder and rushed off to the wishing place to tell the others. Prickling with terror, the Cowardly Lion made spring after spring, but each time he just missed the Flyaboutabus. And every time he made an unsuccessful leap, another feather sprouted gaily in his mane. "Better cut loose and leave him," whispered Nick anxiously, but Notta and Bob hushed him up indignantly and by jumping tried to bring the bus lower.

"Go on and save yourselves," coughed the lion after the tenth attempt. He mopped his forehead dejectedly with his tail, and growled terribly as each feather pricked through. A shout from the clown made him turn. Rushing toward them in tumbling waves of fury were the Uns, led by I-wish-I-was. In a last despairing frenzy, the Cowardly Lion hurled himself into the air, and this time his front paws caught the feather wheels of the bus, and Bob and Notta, pulling together, helped him aboard. There was not a minute to lose, for the Uns were already surrounding the tree. Just as I-wish-I-was sprang into the lower branches, Snorer cut the rope with his knifelike beak and up sailed the Flyaboutabus like a balloon released from its string. Up, up, up they went, till the wild screams of the Uns could no longer be heard. Up, up, and 'round and 'round, plunging now this way and now that, till Notta, Bob and the Cowardly Lion were too shaken and dizzy to know or care what was happening.

But Snorer, more used to flying than the others, kept his head and, waiting his opportunity, seized a long lever that swung loosely to and fro in the front of the bus. He had never been in the Flyaboutabus before, but something told him that the lever must guide the movements of the strange vehicle. Sure enough, as soon as he took hold of it, the darting about stopped and it flew quite steadily.

"Are we still going up?" quavered Notta, without opening his eyes. The clown lay flat on his back in the bottom of the bus with Bob sprawled on top of him. The Cowardly Lion had become wedged under a seat and was heaving and puffing unhappily.

"Yes, but there's some way to bring it down," chirped Nick. "Come have a look. I know how to fly myself, but I don't know how to fly a Flyaboutabus."

CHAPTER 13 Mustafa's Blue Magic

NOTTA rose unsteadily and lifted Bob into one of the side seats. Then he staggered over to the front of the bus and, holding his head with one hand, peered down at the gear and machinery. There was a row of buttons under the steering wheel and the first button said "Slower." Notta hastily pushed this one and the great feather wheels on each side immediately slackened their frantic whirling, and while Nick held the lever Notta investigated their strange flying machine still further. It was shaped like an immense hollowed-out goose, with seats on each side and a high seat near the head. The head turned with the steering wheel and honked loudly when you pushed the button marked "Blow." The tail of the goose moved from side to side, and the four powerful wheels whirled around continuously, so that the noise, when the bus flew swiftly, was terrific. Now, however, it was running more quietly, and Bob, no longer feeling giddy, began to look around with keen interest.

Notta had pressed another button marked "Middle Air-Down," and they were slanting gently toward the earth, floating almost without movement of the great feather wheels.

"Isn't this fun?" cried Bob, giving the clown a little hug as he sat down in the seat ahead. "Well," chuckled Notta, "I don't usually fly before breakfast, but I'd fly from Un any time." Snorer, who still held the lever, beamed over his shoulder at the clown.

"Didn't I manage well?" he chirped happily. "I say, when anything's to be done just leave it to old Nickadoodle."

"We can never thank you enough," declared Notta. "But how will you get back? Will you fly?" "I'm not going back," exulted Snorer, flapping his wings. "I'd be unusual anywhere and I am never going to leave you, you beautiful creature."

"Then our fortune is made," said the clown, with a wink at Bob, "for in a circus you'd be more than half the show."

"I'll show them how to snore," chuckled Nick. "I do that better than anything else. But I'd do anything for you, for I love you with all my heart," continued Snorer calmly, "and the boy, too. And I love-

"Don't you dare love me," rumbled the Cowardly Lion, wrathfully jerking his head from beneath the seat. "I won't allow it!"

"All right," sighed Nick, adjusting his nose. "I'll try not to love you, but it's going to be hard work, you're so handsome."

"There! There!" interrupted the Cowardly Lion gruffly, but he couldn't help looking pleased. "You may like me if you wish," he added mildly. "Any land in sight?"

Notta leaned far over the edge of the bus. "I think I see a village of some kind far down below. Here, Bob, you come help steer." So, while Nick grasped the lever to hold the bus steady, Bob sat in the high seat and turned the great goose head as Notta directed, now to the left and now to the right, and in less than an hour, they were floating slowly over a quaint blue city.

"We're still in the Munchkin country," rumbled the Cowardly Lion, standing on his hind legs and looking over the side.

"Well, we'll just fly over this town and land in one of those fields," puffed Notta uneasily. He was not sure he wouldn't impale the Flyaboutabus on a steeple, or run over some of the inhabitants, if he attempted to land in the city itself. As it was they flew quite a distance before he located all the buttons necessary to make a landing. The Flyaboutabus came to earth with such a bounce that they all flew up like rubber balls, while the bus continued to fly and bump around the field until Notta ran after it and tied it to a tree.

"And now what?" asked Nick, carefully putting his troublesome nose on its hook.

"Breakfast!" wheezed the Cowardly Lion, rolling out of a huge bramble bush. "Aren't you hungry, Bob?"

Bob nodded. "But where are we going to get it?" he asked, looking rather puzzled.

"One never knows in Oz, but if we look carefully, we'll be sure to find something," answered the lion easily.

"Let's make it a game," suggested Notta, patting his figure in various important places to see whether his disguises were still safe. "Now then, all ready for a breakfast hunt. I'll take this field, Nick can take the air and Bob and the Cowardly Lion may have the woods." Bob smiled a little to himself. Hunting breakfast in the woods did seem ridiculous but, as the Cowardly Lion went poking his head in bushes and sniffing around trees in a business-like manner, Bob began to look too. There were plenty of flowers in the woods, and for a time Bob found nothing else. At last pushing through a tangle of vines, the little boy found himself standing under a stout little tree that rattled curiously when the wind passed through its branches. There was a sign on the tree. Standing on his toes Bob spelled it out laboriously. Then he called Notta in excited little shrieks.

"What is it?" panted the clown, breaking through the vines with the Cowardly Lion one leap behind him. "Are you hurt?"

"No," cried Bob, "but I've won!" He pointed gleefully to the tree.

"Travelers' Tree," read Notta, "'planted by the Wizard Wam in the year 1120 O. Z.' Well, hurrah for Wam!" chortled the clown, and began walking all around the tree, while the Cowardly Lion sat down and panted a little from his long run.

The lower branches were gay with many pink cups and on the next, poised over the cups, were the sauciest little tea, cocoa and coffee pots imaginable. Higher up grew clusters of covered dishes of every kind. In the very top of the tree was a large nest of some sort. Snorer, who came flying back just then, declared it was full of eggs. Instead of leaves, the tree flaunted many bright paper napkin blossoms.

"Be sure to plant your dishes when you have finished eating," directed another sign quite sternly. With a happy little chuckle, Bob picked a napkin for each, and three for the Cowardly Lion. Then Notta broke a coffee cup from its stem, and no sooner had he touched the cup than the coffee pot on the next branch tilted gently and filled the cup with fragrant hot coffee. The clown was so startled that he accidentally brushed off another cup, at which a cocoa pot poured a cup full of cocoa over his head before he had time to duck. Spluttering and coughing, Notta drew back, but that was the only accident, and as the clown said, it saved him from washing his face. The Cowardly Lion drank a dozen cups of coffee, one right after the other. Bob had two cups of cocoa, and Snorer, holding a tea cup in one claw, sipped the beverage suspiciously, then flew off to find something more to his taste. Next, Notta picked five dishes of Ozish stew for the Cowardly Lion, a plate full of meat hash for himself and a chop and baked potato for Bob Up. Nothing could have been jollier than that breakfast. The Cowardly Lion forgot to worry about his feathers, Bob forgot he had ever been an orphan, and Notta forgot that he was lost in a strange magic country and in the power of the wicked monarch of Mudge. When they could not eat another bite, Snorer flew to the top of a tree and brought down dozens of eggs from the nest. Strangely enough, they were hard boiled and Bob filled his blouse with them, for as Notta said, there was no telling where they would be by noon. The Cowardly lion now dug a deep hole and they buried all the dishes, which was lots less trouble than washing them, then back they went to the Flyaboutabus.

Bob chattered quite gaily to Nickadoodle, but Notta and the Cowardly Lion walked along in silence. Notta, after the valiant way the lion had defended them from the Uns, could not bear the idea of betraying this strange new friend. Better a thousand times turn blue than have the kind-hearted Cowardly Lion fall into the merciless hands of Mustafa.

"Perhaps the old Mudger's ring will not work any way," reflected Notta uncomfortably. "Perhaps it was just a threat to frighten us." If they could just reach this wonderful Emerald City and tell their story to Dorothy, everything would turn out happily. And that, decided Notta, was what he would do.

The Cowardly Lion, on his part, was thinking how terrible it would have been had he eaten Notta on that first morning of their meeting. He felt guilty every time he looked at the jolly, companionable clown. The more he thought about the Patchwork Girl's suggestion, the more ashamed of himself he felt. Why it was perfectly unish, this idea of devouring a brave man. No wonder he had grown a larger bunch of feathers than Notta and Bob! If there was no other way to acquire courage, he would stay a coward forever and that was the end of that! No sooner had the Cowardly Lion reached this conclusion, than he, too, felt lighthearted and happy again and began to roar with appreciation at Notta's funny antics and jokes.

When they reached the Flyaboutabus, it was jerking at its rope as if it was anxious to be off, and so were they all for that matter.

"Which way is the Emerald City from here?" asked Notta, turning to the Cowardly Lion. "I've lost my bearings." The Cowardly Lion looked first north, then south. He knew they were in the Munchkin Country, but their flight to Un had confused him terribly.

"I think it's straight ahead," he roared uncertainly. "Let's run along the ground for a while till we're sure."

"All right," agreed the clown and, calling to Bob, started for the bus. But half way he stopped in horror. Bob, though perfectly unconscious of it, had turned as blue as washday. At the same time Notta caught the Cowardly Lion staring at him fixedly.

"What's the matter?" choked Notta. "Am I blue, too?"

"Not very," faltered the lion, whose heart was in his throat at the awful change in his friends. Notta looked down at his hands with a shudder. "I'm as blue as the Danube," he muttered unhappily. "But that's all the better. Why, a blue clown ought to be the greatest curiosity yet. Wait till I reach America with my new skin and feathers." Notta went on trying to make a joke of it, but his voice shook a little in spite of himself, and when he tried a light double somersault an even worse thing happened. Halfway around he found himself unable to move, and there he stood on his head, powerless to straighten his arms or legs.

There was no doubt about it, Mustafa had taken off his magic ring. For when Bob tried to run to Notta's assistance he was caught with one foot in the air.

"Help, help!" croaked Snorer, flying frantically from one to the other. His nose came off the hook and hung straight down, but he never even noticed it.

"Fly up a tree, can't you!" roared the Cowardly Lion, as Snorer flapped into his face and almsot blinded him with his wings.

With a quick spring he reached Notta's side. "Better lift me down," puffed the clown, for under the blue he was turning crimson from standing so long upside down. The Cowardly Lion obeyed, and placed him gently on the ground, where he lay as stiff as a statue. "It's magic!" growled the lion. "Blue

magic!"

"It's Mustafa!" groaned Notta, looking dismally at Bob. "I guess I'll have to tell you the whole story." In short jerks and gasps, for he could barely move his lips, he told how Mustafa had sent them to capture the Cowardly Lion and of how he had threatened them with the magic ring if they failed to obey him.

"But you did disobey him," breathed the lion, lashing his tail. "Even when you knew what would happen, you made no attempt to capture me!" Tears of gratitude rolled down his nose. "You're the bravest man in Oz," he choked miserably, "but look what it has brought you to?"

"Weren't you looking for the bravest man in Oz?" asked Notta, suddenly remembering their first conversation. "That's how we happened to meet you, I think."

The Cowardly Lion nodded gloomily, for it was now his turn to confess. With many apologies and sighs he told Notta of his quest for courage and his determination to devour a brave man, the bravest man that he met.

"But you didn't do it!" shouted Notta triumphantly. "And many a chance you've had if you had cared to take it. Cheer up, old fellow, there's some way out of it."

Snorer with suppressed gurgles and sobs had listened to both stories. Now he held up his claw. "As I understand," croaked the bird, pushing his curly nose back of his ear, "Mustafa's ring has turned black because you have not captured the Cowardly Lion?"

"That's about it," admitted Notta, trying to wink at Bob, but finding it impossible to move his eyelid.

"Well, then," sniffled Snorer with a little hop, "why not capture him? Wait, I'll get a rope. He flew off to the Flyaboutabus, first stopping to comfort Bob Up. "Let us meet magic with strategy," cawed Nick, flying back with a long piece of rope in his bill.

"I'll never urge him a step," declared Notta firmly. "Not if I have to stay blue and still for the rest of my life."

"You won't have to," rumbled the Cowardly Lion, who was beginning to look quite cheerful. "I'll run all the way to Mudge and give myself up to this ridiculous Mustafa." He made a little spring, but Snorer with a screech barred the way.

"Have you no sense?" shrilled Nick sharply. "I said strategy." He tied the rope hastily around the Cowardly Lion's neck and placed the end in Notta's stiff hand. And no sooner had he done so than Bob, with a little shout, ran over to Notta and the clown also found himself able to move about once more. While Nick and the Cowardly Lion watched anxiously, the offensive blue faded out, leaving Notta's face white and powdery and Bob's rosy and freckled.

"So long as you keep hold of the rope everything will be all right," chuckled Snorer strutting proudly up and down, "for while you have the rope the Cowardly Lion is captured." "Then we'll just run double harness until we think of something else," said the Cowardly Lion. "Tie the rope 'round your waist, Notta, old boy. Then you'll be sure not to lose me. Rather thoughtfully Notta obeyed, but he could not help thinking that being tied to a Cowardly Lion might prove awfully awkward at times. The Cowardly Lion, however, was in fine spirits, so Notta, swallowing his misgivings, stepped with the others

into the Flyaboutabus. "And now that

I'm captured," chuckled the Cowardly Lion mischievously, "what next?"

"Oh, let someone else decide that," yawned Snorer. Flopping down in the last seat of the bus he was soon sound asleep and snoring loudly.

CHAPTER 14 Flying in a Deluge

LET'S find Dorothy," shouted Bob. It was necessary to shout, for Nick's snores rattled in their ears like a series of explosions. The Cowardly Lion and Notta looked doubtfully at each other. They were not sure that Mustafa's magic ring would allow them to proceed toward the Emerald City.

"We'll try it," shouted Notta. "Which way is it?"

"I don't know," roared the Cowardly Lion. "Let's fly up and look around till I see a familiar landmark." So Notta pressed all the buttons necessary to start the bus, and up they went with such a rush that Bob almost lost his cap and the Cowardly Lion's mane waved like a flag. Bob put both fingers in his ears, for with Nick's snores and the whir of the feather wheels the noise was deafening. When they were about a hundred feet above ground, Notta slowed the bus down and ran it gently and evenly over the pleasant blue fields and forests of the Munchkins. Bob, slipping into the seat beside Snorer, put his nose, which had fallen off his ear, back on its hook. Immediately Snorer awoke and stamped his foot, but in a wink he was asleep again and Bob watched in open-eyed wonder, for snoring in his own ear wakened him about every three minutes, and when he wakened he stamped, so that between snoring and stamping the noise was worse than ever.

"I wish our friend was not such a loud sleeper," growled the Cowardly Lion. "I can't even hear my own heart beat. Say, was that thunder or Snorer?"

"Thunder," quavered Notta anxiously. "See how dark it's growing! Let's go down!"

"It's raining," cried Bob Up in the same breath.

Notta touched the button marked "Faster," and was about to press the one marked "Down," when a blinding flash of lightning zig-zagged across their path. The Cowardly Lion, with a roar of terror, dashed under the last seat of the bus, dragging Notta with him. In his clutch to save himself the clown pressed the button marked "Turn," so that the Flyaboutabus not only increased its speed but churned 'round and 'round till the four occupants were almost knocked senseless.

To make matters worse, the rain came down in perfect torrents. Snorer, awakened by the awful clamor, put his wing around Bob and clutched the arm of the seat with his curling claws. Even so they were shaken up and down till Bob's teeth chattered and nearly drowned by the storm. Notta and the Cowardly Lion in the bottom of the bus were faring even worse. Every time the clown scrambled to his feet, the Cowardly Lion, terrified by a new flash of lightning, would spring in another direction and, tied to him by the stout rope, Notta would be dragged along.

"Help! Help! I'm drowning," gurgled Notta after the eighth fall. A sudden flash of lightning

showed Snorer that the Flyaboutabus was more than half full of water, and Notta lying entirely immersed.

"Bob," cried Nick, "can you hold on a minute by yourself?" Bob nodded his head and with closed eyes grasped the side of the bus. He did not dare open his eyes, for flying in a circle had made him dreadfully dizzy.

Snorer sidled cautiously to the edge of the seat and with a little spring jumped on the Cowardly Lion's back. The big beast was trembling like a runaway race horse, and the beating of his heart shook Snorer up and down. But holding on to his mane with one claw, he felt about in the water till his other one fastened in the belt of Notta's baggy suit. Then he pulled with all his might till, dripping and breathless, the poor clown lay across the Cowardly Lion's back. "Climb on the seat," directed Nick sternly. "Do you want to drown the most beautiful person in Oz?" With shaking legs the Cowardly Lion obeyed, Nick holding Notta safely in place, and when they were both on the seat he begged the lion, with tears in his eyes, to control himself. The Cowardly Lion, catching a glimpse of poor Notta, and realizing for the first time what he had done, wept with embarrassment.

"This is what comes of being tied to a coward," he roared dismally, "but someone clapped me on the back."

"It was a thunderclap," chattered Snorer. "Just close your eyes and hang together, and Bob and I will do the same." Hastily he flew back to the little boy, who was rolling and slipping around on the wet seat. Notta, wise from past experiences, fastened his arms tightly around the Cowardly Lion's neck.

"Divided we fall, together we stand," he panted weakly. "If you're going to jump give me a signal, won't you?" The Cowardly Lion made no answer but just dug his claws into the seat and closed his eyes tighter. The wind whistled shrilly in their ears, the rain pelted mercilessly upon their heads and the bus tumbled and tossed through the air like a rudderless ship.

Suddenly Snorer, who was less affected by the motion of the bus than the others, felt water on his feet.

"Somebody bail out the boat," he shrieked in real terror, "it's sinking!" And so it was. The feather wheels, wet and dragged by the rain, moved slower and slower, and the bus was now so full of water that every time it lurched sideways the luckless voyagers were submerged. It was like flying in a very deep and dangerous tub.

"I never expected to be drowned in the air," screamed Notta. "Shall we jump overboard?" "Do you want to be dashed to pieces?" shouted Nick in reply. "Hold on to the sides." He called more directions, but the fury of the storm drowned even his shrill voice, and each found he had enough to do to keep from being washed over the edge. The water rose higher and higher and the bus sank lower and lower. With eyes closed, and only their heads above water, the four clung grimly to the feathery edges. When the bus finally struck the ground it did so with such force that they all let go and fell back into the water. The Cowardly Lion sprang out first, pulling Notta along with him. Then, realizing Bob was still struggling in the water, he impulsively sprang back, seized the little boy in his teeth and jumped out again. A shout from Snorer made him pause. Notta was bumping along on the end of the rope like a big bag of clothes.

"You've killed him," wailed Nick angrily. But just then, with a watery sigh, the clown opened his eyes. Immediately he began fumbling in his chest pocket. "What are you trying to do?" screamed Snorer.

"My disguise," choked the clown. "I must put on my disguise-first disguise, then joke and run, you know!"

"You don't need any disguise," wailed the Cowardly Lion remorsefully. "You look like almost anyone.

"I feel the same way," coughed the clown. "Am I dashed or drowned or both?"

"Neither," croaked Snorer sorrowfully. "Only tied to a very forgetful friend." The disguises, concealed in various parts of Notta's apparel, were dragged down in disfiguring lumps about his knees. There were four bumps on his forehead and one was coming on the back of his head. Bob, though shivering and wet, was otherwise unhurt, so he and Nick helped Notta to the Cowardly Lion's back, and, dripping and shaken, the air-wrecked party started toward a little hut near which they had fallen.

"Where's the Fallaboutabus?" muttered Notta thickly, as the Cowardly Lion stumbled over the sill.

"I don't care where it is," groaned the lion. "I hope it's busted. I'm against flying in all its branches." He dropped panting on the hearth, and Notta did not even move from his back. The hut evidently belonged to some thrifty woodcutter. It was quite neat and comfortable and there was a fire all ready to light.

Bob, feeling very important, started a cheerful blaze, and though the rain still rattled on the roof, inside it was quite cozy and comfortable. Notta, with Bob's help, took out all of his disguises, and the three that had already been used he hung out in full view. But the clown was so downhearted when Bob started to shake out the others, and seemed to attach so much importance to keeping them secret, that Snorer, without unrolling them, carried them into the next room and hung them on hooks to dry. Notta was quite thin and fallen without them, but when his suit had dried and he had powdered his nose with some of the woodcutter's flour he felt quite restored, and it was not until then that he discovered his feathers were gone. With a little shout he looked at the Cowardly Lion and Bob.

"We've all shed our feathers," he cried exultantly. "They must have washed away. The Cowardly Lion was so pleased that he jumped for joy, and started to run and look in the woodcutter's mirror, upsetting Notta as usual.

"It's because you're no longer unish," explained Snorer wisely, as Notta scrambled to his feet and hastened to accompany the lion to the mirror. "When you both stopped planning unwise and unfair things the feathers just naturally dropped out, and Bob's followed suit, for there isn't an unish bone in that boy's body," continued Snorer, rolling his eyes knowingly. "And now that we've all decided to stick together everything will be as happy as possible."

"We don't stick together very well," sighed the Cowardly Lion, hanging his head. "Did I hurt you, Notta, old fellow?"

"Not much," said the clown, "but I'll have to use more padding if you are going to be so impetuous." Being tied to a Cowardly Lion was proving even worse than he had expected. The Cowardly Lion himself felt uncomfortable and ill at ease.

"See here," he rumbled, as they gathered round the fire again, "I think we had better separate. I'll go on to Mudge and you three go to the Emerald City for help."

"No," objected Notta, wrinkling his poor bumped forehead, "let's stick together a bit longer, for I don't know the way to the Emerald City, and the nine thousand nine hundred and ninety-nine lions might tear you to pieces before we got back. Traveling in this country is dreadfully uncertain. Why, we don't even know where we are now?"

"But the sun's out," cried Bob, running to the window. "Let's see if the Flyaboutabus is still around." The Cowardly Lion started at once to run toward the door, but Notta, with a flying leap jumped on his back and thus avoided another fall. The bus was full of water, but the feather wheels, already somewhat drier, were slowly revolving. As they drew nearer the bus began to run 'round in circles, spraying water in every direction.

"I'll stop it," volunteered Snorer and, swooping down over the wheel, quickly pushed the button marked "Stop." Then Notta and the Cowardly Lion, shoving with all their strength, turned the huge bus over on its side so the water could run out. After this they went back to the hut to fetch the clown's disguises, and then they all sat down under a tree and waited for the bus to dry. Just beyond a little fringe of trees they could see the roofs of a small city, and Snorer, sensibly enough, proposed that they run the bus into the city and inquire of its inhabitants just where they were. "Though as far as I can make out," finished Nick, "if we move toward Mudge all will be well, but if we take any other direction this beautiful person," he pointed his claw at Notta, "will turn blue."

"Regular signals, aren't we, Bob?" The clown thoughtlessly turned a handspring, but the short rope spoiled it and the Cowardly Lion was quite choked.

"We don't twin very well, old fellow, do we?" sighed Notta. "But let's see which is the way to Mudge, for it seems that to Mudge we must trudge."

Hopping on the Cowardly Lion's back he waved him to the left, but at the first step both Notta and Bob turned quite blue.

"Try the right," suggested the clown, pulling the lion's right ear. So the Cowardly Lion pranced to the right, but had not gone a dozen steps before Bob and Notta were bluer than ever.

"Back!" directed Notta, swinging around and seizing the lion's tail. But their blueness only increased.

"Straight ahead then," cried Notta, standing up and waving his arms. So the Cowardly Lion obligingly trotted a few paces straight ahead, and as Bob and the clown promptly turned back to their natural complexions, they concluded that straight ahead was the road to Mudge.

Bob could hardly help feeling pleased that it also led toward the strange city, for Bob was very curious about Oz and its singular peoples, and the little fellow was enjoying every minute of his adventures. Even the wreck and the thunderstorm had given him a new kind of thrill.

"We must all think of a way to outwit Mustafa," said Notta, as they took their places in the Flyaboutabus. "But until we do I shall simply follow my usual rules." So saying, he untied, for a moment, the rope that bound him to the Cowardly Lion and stepped into another of his disguises. This was almost the strangest of the lot. It covered him all but the feet, and in place of their jolly companion stood a huge goggle-eyed fish. The fish skin buttoned down the front, and Notta's arms protruded under the fins, but he was unable to sit down. This, however, he bore quite cheerfully and, standing up very straight and stiff, seized the wheel of the Flyaboutabus, pressed the button marked "Go," and away they did go in a series of bumps and bounces, for the feathery vehicle could not seem to keep its wheels on the ground.

"Too bad you did not put on that rig during the storm," chuckled Nick, hanging on with both claws. "Then you could have swum to earth. But what good is it now?"

"Just you wait," promised Notta confidently. "When these people, whoever they are, see a fish walking about on dry land, they will do just as I ask them to. You see!" Nick looked rather nervous as he adjusted his nose, and the Cowardly Lion shook his head doubtfully.

"But he cannot help his disguises any more than Nick can help his snoring, or I, my cowardice," whispered the big beast huskily to Bob. Bob Up said nothing, but he always felt uncomfortable when Notta put on one of his queer costumes. The bus was bouncing and jerking so crazily that conversation was now impossible. As they came nearer and nearer to the strange city, it became at once apparent that it was unlike any city or town any of them had ever seen or visited. Even the Cowardly Lion, old Oz adventurer that he was and accustomed to unusual sights and places, gave a snort of surprise as the Flyaboutabus rushed through the glittering glass gates.

CHAPTER 15 Mustafa Keeps Watch

MUSTAFA, seated on his blue throne, stared steadily at his magic ring. He had done little else since Bob and Notta's departure, and in consequence was beginning to squint fearfully. On his lap lay the lion book, and when he was not gazing at his ring, the blue-whiskered Monarch looked longingly at the picture of the Cowardly Lion.

In one corner of the tent, in a large cage, crouched the twenty Uns Notta had wished into Mudge, and in the tent top were twenty blue patches where they had burst through. At first Mustafa had been terribly angry and ordered the Featherheads thrown to the lions. But Mixtuppa, pleased by the color and brilliancy of their feathers, begged that they be saved, so she might always have fresh feathers for her turbans. Then the Uns, seeing that Mustafa was almost as wicked and bad tempered as themselves, promised to teach him all the Unish they knew-so that every hour Mustafa was growing unhappier and unpleasanter.

Panapee stepped about breathlessly on tiptoe, for each time Notta had done anything to turn Mustafa's ring black the ruler of Mudge had flown at his royal chamberlain and shaken him unmercifully.

"He is escaping, you villain!" screamed Mustafa the first time-that was when Notta had determined not to betray his faithful four-footed friend.

"Help! Ouch! Does your Majesty expect to stop him by pulling my beard? Let go! Take off your ring," spluttered the unhappy Mudger, "there is no magic in my whiskers."

Realizing the truth of this, Mustafa snatched off his ring, with what alarming consequences to Bob and Notta we all know. Since then his watchfulness had increased, and even while he ate he held his thumb before his eyes so that no move of the clown would escape him. While Mustafa kept watch, the royal jewelers worked day and night upon a gold collar, studded with sapphires, and the forger of swords and scimitars hammered early and late upon a heavy gold chain-for once the Cowardly Lion entered Mudge, Mustafa was determined he should never leave the kingdom. Tazzywaller, who was still lion feeder, peering at intervals through the tent flap thanked his lucky stars he was no longer high

chamberlain of Mudge.

"When this Cowardly Lion actually appears will be time enough for me to be reinstated," muttered the wily fellow to himself. "Meanwhile let Panny take his Majesty's ill-tempered thumps and shakings!"

CHAPTER 16 A Fall From the Sky

TENTS and trapezes!" shouted Notta Bit More, as he tried to keep the Flyaboutabus in the center of the glass street.

"I think we had better run straight through," roared the Cowardly Lion, beginning to tremble slightly. "I don't like the look of this at all."

"Well, whatever happens, try to remember you're tied to me," begged Notta, straightening his fish head hastily.

"Then woe betide us," sighed the Cowardly Lion.

Nick put his wing around Bob and all of them gazed in bewilderment at this bewildering city. "Preservatory," said a large sign just beyond the glass gates, and over the whole city hung a sweet, smoky haze. The houses had glass fronts and were more like cupboards than ordinary dwellings. Each had three stories, or as Bob Up explained later to Dorothy, three shelves. And on these shelves, swinging their legs, sat the oddest individuals in Oz. From head to knee they were enclosed in glass jars. Their arms and legs came through especially cut places, but these were carefully soldered so as not to let in any air. And their heads, somewhat flattened by the glass lids, had a squashed and foolish look.

As the Flyaboutabus bounced merrily along the main street, they began to tumble off the shelves and run down the glass steps of their comical houses. They made no attempt to keep out of the way, so Notta hastily stopped the bus. But even so, one managed to get under the wheels and Bob shivered as the creature's jar splintered to bits on the glass paving stones.

"Now you've done it," groaned Nick, slamming his nose back on its hook. The jarred populace evidently thought so too, for they began hopping up and down, shouting all sorts of threats and abuse. The four travelers could only hear a dull muttering, for the voices of the creatures did not carry through their lids, but the Visitors could tell from the dreadful faces they were making through the glass that they were being threatened and abused. The cries of the unhappy victim under the wheels were quite distinct.

"Save me! Save me, or I shall spoil!" he cried in heartrending tones. Notta was so moved by his evident distress that he impulsively started to jump out of the bus, forgetting the tie between himself and the Cowardly Lion. He therefore got a terrible wrench that twisted his fish head sideways, so he could not see at all. While Bob was straightening this out, the jarmen dragged their companion from beneath the feather wheels, and a simply enormous fellow came running down the street. In one hand he had a pad and in the other a pencil, "Looks like the Prime Pickle," chattered Snorer, as the jarmen began scribbling on his pad. "You have broken the peace," read Notta, as the angry official held up his pad. He was magnificently attired under his jar and was evidently a person of some importance. He had, however,

been preserved by pickling and was of an unhealthy shade of green.

Notta leaned out of the bus and, seizing the pencil and pad, wrote back, "He broke himself, save the pieces."

The rage of the Preserves, as they read these words, increased to a perfect fury. One, evidently a relation of the broken man, snatched off his lid and cried shrilly, "You'll be minced for this!"

The Prime Preserve again scratched furiously on his pad. "You are under arrest. Come with me," directed the pad, when he held it up.

"This is because I forgot the rules," sighed Notta. "If I had been more polite this would not have happened. Shall we fly or follow?"

"Let's follow," rumbled the Cowardly Lion. "We can fly any time, and I'd like to see all the Preserves while I'm about it, for I think Dorothy will enjoy hearing about them." Notta ran the Flyaboutabus slowly and carefully down the glass street after the solemn jarmen, the rest of the population following at a safe distance. Bob's eyes grew larger and larger and when a preserved dog ran briskly in front of the bus he gave a shout of glee. "I think Oz is the funniest place in the world, don't you, Nick?" cried the little boy merrily. "Well," chirruped Snorer, "as I was never any place else, I can hardly say. Look, look! There goes a canned cat!" And so it was, as canned a cat as you'd ever want to see. But right here their guide turned the corner and they found themselves in the presence of another Queen. They knew she was a Queen, for on the pad held up for their inspection the guide had written, "Preserva the Great." Notta stopped the bus before the low glass throne and they stared in wonder at her Majesty. Preserva seemed as much surprised as they.

"Well, I'll be jellied!" wheezed the Queen, taking off her lid and thrusting out a moist head. Bob thought she need not have said this, for she was jellied already-her face and royal robes being a quivery and delicious pink.

The Prime Preserve seemed very much alarmed at the Queen's action and quickly wrote on his pad, "Shut your lid." Bob considered this dreadfully disrespectful, and Snorer began to chuckle with enjoyment. Preserva quite meekly obeyed, but her eyes, behind the thick glass of the jar, grew larger and larger, and finally, snatching the pad from the Prime Preserve, she dashed off in great excitement these words, "A tomato can would be about right for him!" Holding up the pad she pointed joyfully at Notta.

"Serves you right for coming as a fish," chortled the Cowardly Lion. "So we'll have to take you back in a can. Well, well!"

Then he craned his neck to see what else the Queen had written. A rapid conversation was going on between Preserva and their guide. One would write a message and pass it to the other. The other would snatch the page and dash off an answer, and so quickly was it done, the four in the bus had all they could do to keep up with the conversation.

"Pickle the boy, Can the fish, Mince the lion And pot the fowl,"

commanded the Queen.

"Now that's what I'd call taking pot luck," chirped Nick, balancing himself on the edge of the bus.

But the Prime Preserve replied, "Why not preserve them whole for the royal museum?"

While the Queen was considering this suggestion, Notta began feeling in the pockets under his disguise for a paper and pencil, so that he could get into the conversation, but without result.

"No use being polite! Let's joke and run," puffed the clown, after an unsuccessful search. Leaning over the edge of the bus, he tapped the Queen sharply on the jar. Preserva dropped her pad and pencil and almost rolled from the throne. Inside the jar, they could see her jellied figure bubbling with fright and indignation. The Prime Preserve also trembled in his jar, then leaning down to read the last command of her Majesty, he ran off as fast as his crooked green legs would carry him.

"Fetch the Imperial Squawmos," read the Cowardly Lion, with an amused twinkle in his yellow eyes as Notta tore off the page.

"If we stay here it is plain we shall be pickled to death," scrawled the clown, "so we bid you a fond but final farewell."

The Queen leaned forward, the better to read Notta's message and, while Nick, Bob and the Cowardly Lion fairly rocked with merriment at her discomfited expression, she suddenly unscrewed her lid. "Help!" screamed Preserva loudly, sticking her head out of the jar. "Help! Help!" Then back went her head and down went the lid, only to have the whole performance repeated the next second. This she kept up at regular intervals until the whole party were simply convulsed. But it would have been wiser had they, instead of laughing, looked behind them, for presently a terrible thump on the back sent all the scales on Notta's disguise to trembling. It was the Imperial Squawmos, followed by all the Preserves in the city. While a dozen ran to calm the agitated Queen, who was still quivering in her jar, the rest surrounded the Flyaboutabus. Most alarming of all, the Imperial Squawmos was not in a jar. She was, in fact, a huge and towering cookywitch with a passion for preserving. And a cookywitch, I don't mind telling you, is next in wizardry to a sorceress. She had put up the inhabitants of the entire city and was the real ruler of the Preserve.

"A fish!" shrilled the Cookywitch, prodding Notta with a fork as long as an umbrella. "Ah, what an extreme pleasure. I have canned cats, dogs and people, but never a fish. And a boy," she chucked Bob familiarly under the chin. "Spare the jar and spoil the child," she quoted with a dreadful wink that sent Snorer circling into the air, where he flew uneasily over the heads of his luckless companions.

"Off to the preserving kettles with you!" shrilled the Squawmos, and Notta, in real alarm, made a dash toward the buttons to start the bus, but the Cookywitch brought down a heavy iron spoon, that she carried in one hand, and crushed the entire steering gear. The clown, seeing that escape for the time being was impossible, decided to go back to rule two and gain a little time by politeness.

"Imperial and Imperious Squawmos," began Notta, speaking somewhat stuffily through the fish head, "why are you so determined to preserve us against our wills, and why have you preserved these others?"

The Squawmos immediately put down her fork, for she was terribly fond of conversation, and she could not very well converse with the Preserves, whose language at best was an indistinct jargon.

"Strangers," wheezed the Squawmos, "since I am to have the pleasure of putting you up I don't mind explaining my little system. In a jar, barring breaks, you will last for years, and needing neither food nor drink will find it quite unnecessary to work. So you see, we put ourselves up here for the same

reason most housewives preserve their fruit-to keep from working."

"Put yourselves up to keep from working," gasped Notta. "But I love my work!"

"Then you are very different from most people," observed the Squawmos, looking at the Cowardly Lion with great interest. "But, never mind, you will soon be a perfect Preserve. And this lion-he will look perfectly handsome in a jar. Let me see, shall I put him up in vinegar or preserve him in spices?"

The Cookywitch closed her eyes and Notta, winking warningly at the Cowardly Lion, who was about to spring on the Imperial monster, cautiously moved his hand toward the only button in the Flyaboutabus that the iron spoon had not smashed-the button that said "Up!" The Prime Preserve saw him and made indistinct gurgles of protest under his lid, but before he could warn the Cookywitch or the Prime Preserva, Notta had pressed the button, and the Flyaboutabus, with a jerk that sent hundreds of the jarmen crashing to the glass pavement and knocked Squawmos head over heels, rose into the air. Snorer made a flying leap and caught it on the wing, so to speak, and in a flash they were hurtling toward the sky. Notta, jerking off his disguise, frantically felt for all the buttons, but they were hopelessly broken. "This continual flying about makes me light-headed," groaned the lion, hanging on to the arms of the seat with both paws.

"Where are we going, Notta?" gasped Bob, edging close to Snorer and peering giddily over the edge of the bus.

"Up as far as it takes us, and then-" Notta shuddered and clung dizzily to the wheel. And up they did go, faster and faster, until they lost all track of time and place and had not even breath enough to talk. Then, with a terrific crash, the Flyaboutabus ran into a small day star, turned completely over and spilled out the whole company.

There, caught by its feather wheel, it hung on the point of the star, while Notta, Bob, Nick and the Cowardly Lion fell head over heels through the air. Nick caught himself first and, flying after Bob, edged himself around until the little boy was on his back. Notta and the Cowardly Lion were falling together, first one and then the other on top, and Nick had to fly rapidly to keep pace with their falling.

"Oh, my quills and feathers!" spluttered the faithful bird, "they'll be shattered to bits! Oh, my tail and top knot! What shall I do? Bob I can save, but that beautiful clown will be broken to pieces!" Though falling, as Notta explained afterward, did give one a sinking sensation, it was not nearly so unpleasant as he had expected and, when he looked up and saw Bob safely on Snorer's back, he fell more calmly, trying now and then to do the side stroke and calling encouragement to the Cowardly Lion. Earth as it came in view was not very encouraging and Snorer screamed with fright when he saw the rocky nature of the country into which his friends were tumbling. "Goodbye!" roared the Cowardly Lion, looking up mournfully at the clown, who was at that minute a little above him. "I'll never forget you, for you are a brave man in spite of your disguises." The clown was too affected by this speech to answer and, when he glimpsed the jagged rocks below, he decided that soon he would be disguised as a pan cake. So he merely waved to the others and closed his eyes.

Like a flash Nick darted down and set Bob on a huge boulder. Then, with wings spread, he flew up and down, intending, if possible, to break Notta's fall with his own feathery body. But Notta and the Cowardly Lion never did finish their fall-for as they whizzed past a tall, craggy rock, jutting out from the side of a mountain, a stone arm reached out and miraculously caught the rope that held them together.

"Scrags and scrivets! What kind of birds are these?" cried a grating voice, and down from the

ledge stepped a roughly hewn man of stone. Swinging Notta and the Cowardly Lion easily in one hand, he came crunching toward Nick and Bob.

CHAPTER 17 The Stone Man of Oz

BOB put his arm around Snorer's neck, and Nick, clapping his nose on its hook, prepared to fly from this new danger. Dangling from his end of the rope, Notta sighed mournfully to think he had not disguised himself, and the Cowardly Lion, after one look at the stone hand that held them, closed his eyes and began to tremble violently. The Stone Man was about three times the size of an ordinary man and carved out of a huge block of granite. His features, though rough hewn, were not unpleasant and Notta, after a few false starts, ventured a remark.

"It was very kind of you to catch us," faltered the clown.

"It wasn't kindness; it was curiosity," rasped the Stone Man frankly. "I've been watching you fall for some time, and I must say you're the oddest looking creatures I've seen in a stone age.

As he said this, the Stone Man placed them on a flat rock that was on a level with his nose. And as he could not sit down, he leaned up against another rock and regarded them inquisitively.

"Come on up here," he called gruffly to Snorer, "and bring that little fellow with you." Rather reluctantly, Nick flew up with Bob, and the four fallers tried to compose themselves and catch a bit of the breath they had lost on the trip down. The stone eyes of the Stone Man rested longest on the Cowardly Lion. "I like you best," he remarked presently. "You're better made than these others and not so likely to crumble. They look too soft to last long." He poked his stone finger experimentally into Notta's ribs, and only the clown's disguises saved him from serious injury.

"Don't do that," growled the Cowardly Lion sharply.

"What a lovely voice," mused the Stone Man almost to himself. "Tell me, what are you?"

"I'm a Cowardly Lion," roared the big beast huskily, "so don't frighten me, for if you do I'll pound you to pebbles."

"I don't believe he could do it," creaked the Stone Man, turning to Notta. "Do you?"

"Well, he's a terrible fighter," admitted the clown, with a reassuring wink at Bob, "but let's not talk of such disagreeable things. Since you were kind enough to catch us perhaps you will tell us who you are.

"Crunch is my name," answered the Stone Man, picking up a rock and crumbling it to powder in his hand.

"I think we'd better be going," quavered Snorer tremulously. "We're late as it is." Nick had no desire to fall into the Stone Man's clutches.

"Don't go," begged Crunch. "I haven't talked to anyone since I was excavated."

"How long ago was that?" asked Notta, scratching his ear.

"Oh, several ages ago," replied the Stone Man carelessly. "But I'm much older than that, for I was hacked out by a primitive Oz man to decorate this cave. But a landslide caved in the cave and I was buried for several centuries."

"Who dug you up," roared the Cowardly Lion, "and how is it you are alive?"

"A wizard named Wam dug me up," explained Crunch in his scratchy voice, "and brought me to life with a shaker of magic powder. I tried to thank him, but he ran away before I could catch him, so I've stood around ever since trying to find out what one does with a life."

"Great Grandfathers!" choked the clown. "Fancy being alive for centuries and not knowing what to do. Why, there are hundreds of things to interest you, especially in a magic country like Oz.

You could travel, and help other folks not so strong as yourself. You could offer your services to the Queen, or even build a city!"

"Could I?" gasped Crunch. He stared off into space as if he saw himself doing all these things, and the idea was almost too amazing to believe. Then, bringing his stone heels together with a click, he announced determinedly, "I'll do it! I'll travel, I'll help people, I'll see the Queen and build a city!"

"Hurrah!" cried Notta. "That's the way to talk. And since we are traveling, why not join us?" Crunch, he decided, might prove useful in a battle.

"Can I walk beside him?" asked the Stone Man, pointing at the Cowardly Lion.

"If you're steady on your pins," rumbled the Cowardly Lion, "and promise not to fall on me.

"Where does the Queen of this country live?" asked Crunch, after he had promised not to fall on the Cowardly Lion.

"In the Emerald City," piped up Bob, who had been listening to the Stone Man's conversation with deep interest.

"Oh, that must be over there," said Crunch, waving toward the east, "for often at night, when I've climbed Stone Mountain, I've seen bright green lights twinkling in the darkness."

"Why, of course it is," roared the Cowardly Lion in great excitement, "though why you have never gone over to find out I cannot imagine!"

"That's because you were never a stone man," sighed Crunch solemnly.

"Then we'll soon see Dorothy and the Scarecrow!" cried Bob, clapping his hands. "Come on, let's go to the Emerald City right away.

Nick flew off to the top of the mountain to investigate for himself.

"You forget Mustafa's enchantment," sighed Notta, pointing sadly to the rope that still bound him to the Cowardly Lion. "I daresay if we took a step toward the Emerald City, Mustafa would ring us

up again."

"Who is Mustafa and why has he enchanted you?" demanded Crunch, rubbing his stone forehead noisily. Notta explained as much of their story as he thought the Stone Man would understand, and when he had finished Crunch gave a little spring that almost knocked them from the ledge. "Why, it is as clear as cobbles," he roared, bringing down his fist upon a rock and splintering it to fragments. "You are weaker than I and, as I have fully determined to help someone, let me help you. Where is this Mustafa of Mudge? Take me to him and I will pound him to powder and disperse him to the winds."

Before Notta could answer Nick came flying back to assure them that he had really seen the Emerald City from the mountain top and that it lay scarcely a half day's journey away. "Then it seems to me," said Notta, who had been doing some quick thinking, "that the time has come for us to separate. Bob, Nick and I will hasten to this Emerald City and appeal to Ozma, Dorothy and the Wizard of Oz. Meanwhile the Cowardly Lion can start toward Mudge and thus Mustafa's ring will not betray us. But before he reaches there we will have found a way to help him."

"And I will go with the Cowardly Lion," declared Crunch promptly, "for I would rather help him than any one else."

"Hurrah!" cried Bob Up, and so it was all decided. Then Notta sat on the Cowardly Lion's back and he sprang down from the ledge. Next Snorer flew down with Bob, and the clown untied the rope that tied him to the lion. Immediately he and Bob turned blue, but when the Cowardly Lion took a few steps south, the blue quickly faded out. Notta was so relieved to be free that he turned six somersaults, stood on his head, and ran several paces on his hands, while Bob and Nick shouted with glee.

"Crush and crumble me!" rasped the Stone Man, eyeing the clown in alarm, "is that the way men get about nowadays? The men I watched in the stone age never did that and I simply could not manage it, you know."

"Don't try," begged Notta, and Nick hastened to assure him that most men walked in the usual fashion one foot before the other.

"Mudge should be exactly southwest from here, so come on, old Cave Man, let's be moving. Together we'll conquer the whole tribe of Mudgers," said the lion.

"You won't have to," cried Notta, giving the Cowardly Lion an affectionate hug, "if this Wizard of Oz is as clever as he's said to be."

Crunch waited impatiently while Nick and Bob bade the Cowardly Lion goodbye. Having stood around for seven centuries, he could not bear to waste another second, and when the Cowardly Lion at last declared himself ready to go he tramped off joyfully, each step shaking the ground like a small earthquake and enveloping the poor lion in a cloud of dust.

"Goodbye!" called Bob Up shrilly, as they turned into a narrow rocky path and disappeared behind a small mountain.

"Goodbye!" roared the Cowardly Lion, bravely waving his tail in farewell. So much had happened since their flight from Un that Notta had forgotten all about the time of day, but when he started up the mountain, he grew so faint, he had to sit down on a rock. Bob, too, looked pale and weary, and every few hops Nick would close his eyes and indulge in a tremulous snore.

"Great Elephants!" puffed Notta at last, squinting up at the sun. "It must be nearly five o'clock and we've had nothing to eat since morning. Have you still got those eggs, Bob Up?" Bob felt hurriedly in his blouse and, with a triumphant smile, produced the eggs they had picked from the travelers' tree. They were somewhat squashed, but when the shells had been removed they tasted delicious to the famished travelers. Washed down with some water from a little spring, the food renewed their strength and courage for the journey ahead.

"I hope nothing happens to the Cowardly Lion," said Bob, as they started up the mountain again, "for I love him."

"So do I," croaked the Snorer, who was flying a little ahead, "and I shall miss him very much when we go to America to make our fortune. But, of course I could not leave that beautiful person." He rolled his eyes proudly at Notta, and the clown quite unconsciously sighed. Life in a circus would seem terribly tame after this marvelous trip through Oz.

"We ought to be home tomorrow, if everything works out," he remarked soberly, with an anxious glance at Bob. At the word "home" the little boy shivered slightly, for home to him meant a great, dreary institution where little boys whom nobody wanted were grudgingly sheltered and eternally shaken. In his heart he hoped the magic of this Wizard of Oz would not be strong enough to send them back. Notta was wondering to himself whether the managers of the home would trust a little boy's future to a clown and resolving darkly that, if they wouldn't, he'd take him anyhow. But he said nothing of this to Bob Up, and presently broke into such a comical song Bob forgot all about going back. This was the song:

"A goblin's ears are very long, A goblin's nose goes wobble, But what I'd really like to know Is what makes goblins gobble? Perhaps they gobble 'cause they're imps-And dreadfully imp-olite! Pshaw, all they do is squabble hobble, Gobble through the night!"

"Speaking of night," chuckled Snorer, balancing on the branch of a low tree, "we'll probably have to spend it in that forest below, for it would hardly be safe to travel in the dark and it'll be dark by the time we're down this mountain.

"Well," laughed Notta, "it wouldn't be the first time Bob and I have slept in a forest, and your snores ought to scare off any wild animals."

"That's so," sighed Nick, adjusting his nose, and quite satisfied he flew on ahead. The path was rough and uneven and, though Notta and Bob frequently slipped and slid, in another hour they were safely down the mountain. It was dusk as they stepped into the strange forest, and Bob fancied the trees were peering down at him kindly. They were so tired Notta paused under an immense maple tree and Nick leaned up against the trunk and fell instantly to snoring and stamping, while Notta began gathering branches and leaves for beds. The clown spread his old lion disguise over Bob's pile and the little boy, stretching out comfortably, gazed up at the first star twinkling merrily in the evening sky and thought how strange his narrow bed at the home would seem after this. The wind sighed in the tree tops with a gentle and soothing sound, and even Nick's snoring seemed comforting and pleasant to Bob Up.

"Bob," said Notta, as he dropped down beside him, "this is the friendliest forest I was ever in. Bob nodded, and at this a little rustle went rippling through the forest as if the trees had actually heard him, and in the same instant each tree quietly opened its trunk and drew forth a fiddle.

Before Notta and Bob had recovered from their surprise a wave of music swept through the

wood, now soft, now loud, but more entrancing than any they had ever heard. And the trees, swaying and bending in the dim starlight, plied their bows with more skill than any orchestra in the mortal world. For Bob and Notta, you see, had come to the Fiddlestick Forest of Oz.

CHAPTER 18 Notta's Last Disguise

OF all his adventures, Bob remembered this strange concert longest. The fairylike music, that even made the Moon bend down to listen, the drumlike accompaniment of Nick's snores and the misty faces of the trees themselves, bending down in the dim starlight, all added to the enchantment. Bob could not remember falling asleep, for all through his dreams marched the music of the fiddles-but he must have slept, for opening his eyes suddenly, he found the sun out and shining merrily. He looked around to ask Notta whether he had dreamed about the fiddles or really heard them, but Notta was nowhere to be seen. Nick, too, had vanished.

Rather alarmed, Bob jumped up. As he did so a large green leaf with white lines traced on it fluttered to the ground.

"You may use the Fiddlebow Boat," said the leaf and, looking up, Bob fancied the big tree was smiling at him. So he made a stiff little bow and, holding fast to the leaf, started off uneasily to find his friends. The sound of water rippling over stones took him to the left, for he was terribly thirsty and in a few seconds he had come out on a rapid little stream. The water was so clear Bob could see the white stones gleaming on the bottom. Throwing himself down, he took a long, satisfying drink. When he straightened up he was astonished to see a boat tied to a slim birch that leaned far out over the water's edge.

"Why, this must be the Fiddlebow Boat," cried the little boy, hastening over to examine it. It was of a smooth and satiny garnet, and exactly the shape of a huge, hollowed-out fiddle. It rode gaily at the end of its pink line, and this discovery only made Bob more anxious than ever to find the clown. Calling first Notta and then Nick, he ran back to the big tree, and just as he reached it was horrified to see a witch bending over the pile of leaves he had slept on. With a shrill scream Bob turned to flee but the witch came bounding and hobbling after, calling to him in pleading tones not to run away. But the more the witch called, the faster Bob ran, and he might have been running yet, had he not tripped over the roots of a tree and fallen headlong. In an instant the black hands of his pursuer jerked him to his feet.

"Bob! Bob!" cried the witch remorsefully, "don't you know me? Bob, it's Notta only old Notta!"

"Notta?" gasped Bob, for he was entirely out of breath and trembling like a leaf.

"There! There!" coaxed the clown. "It's only one of my disguises." As Bob continued to regard him with disfavor, he explained hurriedly, "You see we're going to this Emerald City, Bob Up, where every other person is more or less magic. Now, what attention would they pay to a silly clown? Why, they might not even listen to me. But if I pretend to be a powerful witch, Princess Ozma and the Wizard of Oz, whom we've been hearing so much about, will hasten to do what I say."

"You'll frighten them," said Bob stubbornly, but Notta shook his head. "People in fairy cities aren't frightened as easily as little boys," he chuckled knowingly. "And just look what I've found you for

breakfast!"

In Bob's cap he had gathered nuts and berries of every kind, and Bob, seeing Notta was determined to go to the Emerald City as a witch, said nothing more but began to eat hungrily. After a hearty breakfast, Nick came flapping back and was so startled by the clown's disguise that his nose fell off the hook with a crash. But Notta soon reassured him and, as Bob was tingling with impatience to show them the boat they finished the berries in great haste.

"This is the friendliest forest I ever was in," repeated the clown, viewing Bob's discovery with delight. "This will take us out faster than we could walk and it's much safer than the Flyaboutabus. Now then, all aboard for the Emerald City!"

Gathering up his witch skirts, Notta leaped into the Fiddlebow Boat and, seizing the long oar, pushed it in close to the bank. Snorer alighted on the end, and Bob settled himself cozily among the cushions. Merrily the boat went dancing down the stream, propelled by Notta's strong arm. The only thing that marred Bob's pleasure was the thought of Notta's disguise. But he determined to tell Dorothy, or the first person they met, that the clown was not a witch, but the jolliest fellow in the world. Somewhat comforted by this thought, Bob gave himself up to pure enjoyment.

"Did you hear the fiddles last night?" asked the little boy presently.

"Bob," sighed Notta, "I did, and never heard any like it in the whole of my travels."

"It must have been my snoring you heard," said Nick, preening his feathers busily, for he wished to appear at his best in the Emerald City. Notta laughed uproariously at this and almost upset the boat. They all felt light-hearted and gay, and Bob was no more like the solemn little orphan who had fallen into Mudge than Nick's snoring was like the music in the Fiddlestick Forest.

"I wonder if there are any other boys and girls in the Emerald City besides Dorothy?" asked Bob, after a little pause. "And I wonder if Dorothy ever heard of Un or Doorways?"

"You'll have plenty to tell this little girl from Kansas, eh, Bob Up?" smiled the clown, and Snorer, after adjusting his nose, related all that he knew of the Emerald City, which unfortunately wasn't much, as very little news of the capital ever came to Un.

"I hope the Cowardly Lion is having as pleasant a journey as this," said Notta, as they skimmed along under the branches of the trees, "and I hope Crunch is behaving himself properly."

"I should think he'd be a hard person to get along with," chirped Nick, giving the clown a nudge so he would be sure to see the joke.

"Because he's made of stone, you mean?" replied Notta. "Well, trust the Cowardly Lion to manage him. Hello! Looks as if we were out of the woods."

A turn of the rapid little stream had brought them into a broad meadow and the Fiddlebow Boat stopped of its own accord.

"Guess this is as far as it goes," puffed the clown, after vainly endeavoring to push it forward with the oar. So he guided it to the bank and they all hopped out, "But it doesn't seem right to leave it here," observed Notta, scratching his ear anxiously.

No sooner had he spoken than a tall tree near the edge of the water leaned down, seized the boat in its branches, and passed it along to the next tree, and in a second it was being tossed lightly from tree to tree, much to the amazement of Notta and Bob.

With wonders happening every moment, you would expect them to be used to it, but each time they were newly astonished. When the last trace of the magic boat disappeared, they struck out across the meadow, for already over the top of a little hill they could see the sparkling green towers of the Emerald City of Oz.

Nick, hopping sidewise, paused every few minutes to see that his curly nose was safely on its hook. Notta began rehearsing long speeches he meant to make to the lovely little ruler of Oz, while Bob skipped between the two, nearly bursting with excitement. On the other side of the meadow they came to the yellow brick road mentioned by Mustafa. From the windows of the little green cottages scattered here and there, the inhabitants looked at them curiously, and several of the quaintly dressed town folk whom they met on the road, at sight of a witch, took immediately to their heels. But without waiting to explain themselves or talk to anyone, the three hurried on to the gates of the Emerald City itself.

Bob gazed with round-eyed delight, Nick began to snort with surprise, and Notta, who had seen in the course of his travels every great city on two continents, was struck dumb with amazement, for the capital city of Oz outshone them all in beauty and magnificence. Its streets of green marble sparkled with emeralds, and the palace, rising majestically from its flowering gardens, shone with splendor in the bright morning sunshine. The Guardian of the Gate was breakfasting in his cottage, and Nick flew over the bars and, turning the emerald key, quietly admitted Bob and Notta.

"Let us proceed to the main tent," puffed the clown a bit nervously, for he felt ill at ease among so much magnificence. He had forgotten every word of his speech and, with a sigh, resolved to stick to his old rules disguise, Politeness, joke and run. "Though I see no reason why we should have to run," he muttered uneasily, settling his witch hat a bit more firmly.

It was still rather early and the gardens were deserted, but all at once Bob, who was a bit ahead of the others, spied a little girl in pink, sitting on the edge of a fountain, reading.

"It's Dorothy!" cried Bob, waving excitedly.

"She looks just like a picture in the lion book! Come on!" Immediately Snorer spread his wings and flung himself into the air. Notta grasped his black cloak and catching Bob's hand started on a run for the fountain.

The flapping of Nick's wings made Dorothy look up. With a little scream she jumped to her feet, for any little girl, even though she is a Princess of Oz, cannot help being afraid of witches.

"Help!" cried Dorothy, turning to run. But just then she caught sight of a gold bucket that always stood beside the fountain, and she remembered an experience she had had long ago with the wicked witch of the West. Water had melted one witch-why not another? Seizing the bucket, she filled it hastily at the fountain and, just as the witch, strange bird and little boy reached her, she flung its contents over the witch's head.

"Oh! Oh!" screamed Snorer. "You have insulted the most beautiful person in Oz."

Notta, taken completely by surprise, could do nothing but choke and splutter.

"Wait!" panted Bob, for Dorothy was refilling the bucket. But he was too late and down splashed another bucket on Notta's head, carrying away his hat and drenching his black wig. Unable to speak, Notta began to wave his arms, and this was anything but reassuring to Dorothy. Snatching a little silver whistle that hung on a ribbon on her neck, she blew on it shrilly. The next instant running feet could be heard on all the garden paths and in a twinkling Bob and Notta were surrounded.

"What is it?" boomed Sir Hokus of Pokes, Dorothy's Knight Errant. He brought his mailed fist heavily down upon Notta's witch shoulder. The Soldier with the Green Whiskers, not to be outdone, grasped Bob Up and Tik Tok leaned over stiffly and seized Snorer by the neck. More and more people kept arriving, and though Bob tried his best to make himself heard, in the general confusion his voice was drowned out, and in disgrace they were marched to the palace. Ozma was having a quiet game of checkers with the Scarecrow and looked up in amazement as the company burst into the throne room.

"A witch!" shrilled the Patchwork Girl, dancing madly at the head of the procession,

"A witch, a witch, As black as pitch, Has come to steal your throne And sich!"

"If they would only stop screaming," thought poor Bob, looking anxiously at the lovely little figure of Ozma of Oz. Just then they did, for Ozma, glancing in surprise and displeasure at the witch, raised her scepter for silence.

CHAPTER 19 In the Emerald City

"WHO found this witch?" asked Ozma anxiously, for witches of any sort distressed the kind little fairy ruler.

"Who found witch?" repeated Scraps, waving her cotton arms wildly; but at a reproving nod from the Scarecrow she subsided. Before Dorothy could answer, Tik Tok's machinery ran down and his iron hold on Nick's neck relaxed, much to his relief.

"Villains!" squalled Snorer, flapping into the air. "This is a fine way to receive friends. I've a mind to pull out your beard," he screamed angrily, beating his wings in the face of the Soldier with the Green Whiskers.

"Run, Bob," he cried, as the terrified soldier let go of the little orphan. Everyone was so surprised at Snorer's sudden outbreak and his unusual appearance that they simply gasped. But Notta, realizing what a bad impression they were making, called pleadingly for Snorer to take his claws out of the soldier's whiskers, and as Bob Up added his voice to Notta's, Snorer let go and retired sulkily to the top of a golden cabinet. "They're worse than Uns," he muttered, stamping his foot.

"I think there is no harm in the boy," whispered the Scarecrow to Ozma, for he noticed that Bob made no attempt to escape.

"Why do you travel in the company of a witch?" asked Ozma rather sternly.

"He's not a witch!" cried Bob Up miserably.

"He's Notta!"

"Not a witch?" puzzled Ozma, wrinkling up her brows.

All the celebrities stared suspiciously at their prisoner, but as Sir Hokus had him firmly by one arm and the Tin Woodman by the other, Notta could not remove his disguise. "The boy has spoken the truth," quavered the clown. "If these gentlemen will let me go for a moment I will prove that I am not a witch."

"Don't let go," advised the Scarecrow, wrinkling his cotton forehead, "for she may bewitch us. Have little Dorothy tell her story." So, while Bob fumed with impatience and Notta groaned at the delay, Dorothy told how they had come flying toward her in the garden.

"But if it had been a witch, wouldn't she have melted when you threw the water on her?" asked Trot, who had listened so far in silence. She liked the looks of this little boy and felt that some mistake had been made.

"Call the Wizard of Oz!" cried Jack Pumpkinhead. This was such a reasonable suggestion Bob wondered how a pumpkinhead could have thought of it. As there seemed no way of convincing these interesting folks that the clown was not a witch, Bob gave it up for the moment and began examining them with close attention.

Tik Tok simply fascinated the little boy, and he immediately decided that, next to Notta, he had never seen anyone more jolly than the Scarecrow. Even the Knight, now that he had his visor up, no longer alarmed Bob Up. And when the Comfortable Camel thrust his long neck in through one of the windows to inquire what was the matter Bob burst out laughing in spite of himself. Right here the little, bald Wizard of Oz came bouncing into the throne room, a small black grip clutched in one hand.

"If this person is a witch," sighed Ozma, after the Scarecrow had related all that had happened, "she must be destroyed. Can you discover by your magic whether or not it is a witch?"

"Certainly," said the sprightly little wizard, laying out his tools in a businesslike manner. Snorer flew down from the cabinet in alarm.

"Will it hurt?" he cawed uneasily.

"If she is not a witch she has nothing to fear," replied the Wizard, eyeing Snorer with amazement. The Wizard, sending for a tumbler, first mixed a pink and green powder together and then added a drop of red liquid that immediately set the powder to sizzling. When it bubbled to the top he flung the contents of the tumbler directly in the witch's face. Sir Hokus and the Tin Woodman ducked and Notta spluttered, but the fiery liquid trickled harmlessly off his nose.

"It is not a witch!" smiled the Wizard of Oz, turning to Ozma.

"Then why do you pretend to be?" asked the little Queen. Her voice, though still stern, sounded very much relieved. Taking heart, Notta begged his two captors to release him. This they did, and the clown hastily tore off his wig and stepped out of the black cloak.

"Why, it's a clown!" cried Dorothy in delight.

"I told you he wasn't a witch," shrilled Bob Up, wriggling away from the Soldier with the

Green Whiskers and rushing over to Notta Bit More.

"Well, bless my heart!" cried the Wizard of Oz, bounding down the steps of the throne two at a time. "This is a surprise. Sir, let me embrace you!" And as Notta made no objection he gave him several good hugs. "I used to work in a circus myself," beamed the little wizard, "and I tell you a clown is a sight that makes me homesick!"

"As to that," said Notta with a little bow to Ozma, "this country surpasses any circus I was ever in!"

"Can you do funny tricks?" asked Dorothy.

"He can somersault, cartwheel, stand on his head, walk on his hands and he knows lots of songs don't you, Notta?" cried Bob, dancing with excitement.

"So do I," shrilled Scraps jealously, "and if he thinks I cannot stand on my head, let him watch."

Sir Hokus of Pokes restrained the reckless girl, and Ozma, tapping on the arm of her throne for order, begged Notta to explain his presence in the Emerald City and his reason for coming as a witch.

"We are sorry to have treated you so rudely," said Ozma gravely, "but we must blame your costume for that."

"Certainly," said Scraps, shaking her cotton finger at Notta. "If you come as a witch you must expect to be treated every witch way." Notta looked rather embarrassed as he explained his rules of disguise, politeness, joke and run.

"I always seem to choose the wrong disguise," sighed the clown.

"Don't you think it is better to be natural?" asked the Scarecrow in his jolly voice. "Especially when you are naturally so nice?" Notta was quite flustered at this charming speech.

"First be nice and then be natural. How's that for a rule?" cried Scraps brilliantly, and they were all so relieved that the clown had turned out so well they laughed heartily.

"Ver-ry good," ticked Tik Tok, whom somebody had wound up. "I am naturally bright be-cause I am nat-u-ral-ly cop-per!"

"Well, after this," said Notta, when the merriment had subsided, "after this, I will be myself, for I guess it is better to be yourself even if you are a clown."

"But how did you reach Oz? Who is this little boy? And do introduce us to your feathered friend," begged the Scarecrow, who had been glancing curiously from one to the other.

"This," said Notta, drawing Bob close to him, "is Bob Up, an orphan from Philadelphia, and the bravest and best little boy in America."

"Hello, orphan!" cried Scraps genially:

"Orphan, orphan, howdedo, You love me and I'll love you! First you're here, then gone again,

Do come orphan on again!"

A stern "hush" from the Knight silenced her, and Notta introduced Nickadoodle from Un. Nick immediately took the floor, and carefully demonstrated his telephone nose, which he explained had been invented by Uncle Billy. So, everyone, including the Scarecrow, came down and shook him gravely by the claw. Then, as they were all anxious to hear what had brought the three travelers to the Emerald City, they grouped themselves about the throne and Notta started to tell the history of his amazing three days in Oz.

But just as he was explaining in a spirited manner their flight to Mudge, a bustle in the great hall without interrupted the story, and a breathless footman came rushing in to announce the arrival of Glinda, the Good Sorceress, who ruled over the Quadling country of Oz.

"Something must have happened!" cried Ozma, jumping up in distress.

"Don't be so previous, my dear," begged the Scarecrow, himself falling down the steps of the throne to show how collected he was. But at that instant Glinda herself swept into the throne room. Twelve little maidens in lovely red dresses held up her long train and Bob Up, looking at Glinda's beautiful face and lovely flame-colored robes, thought he had never seen a more radiant fairy. The courtiers and celebrities hastily made way for Glinda.

Hurrying up to Ozma the sorceress asked anxiously, "Where is the Cowardly Lion? Has anyone seen the Cowardly Lion?"

Now, strangely enough, no one in the palace had missed their big chum, but at Glinda's words they all began shaking their heads and looking uneasily at one another.

"Why, I haven't seen him for two days," cried Dorothy, with a worried little frown.

"We have!" cried Bob Up, forgetting for a moment he was in the presence of royalty. "We saw him yesterday."

"What's happened?" cried Notta. "I see now we never should have left him."

"Why, do you know the Cowardly Lion?" asked Ozma in surprise, for Notta had not yet come to their meeting, nor even told them of Mustafa's determination to add the Cowardly Lion to his collection.

So, as quickly as he could, and without stopping to describe Doorways or Un, the clown told his story.

"Ah," sighed Glinda, as he finished, "that explains the entry in the Magic Record Book. Hurry up, my friends. Some of us must go instantly to Mudge."

"What did the records say?" asked Dorothy, and all the celebrities looked frightened and anxious, for the Cowardly Lion was a great favorite. The Magic Record Book is one of the treasures of Oz. It tells, just as they happen, all the events in that marvelous country and in every other country.

"It said," began Glinda in her soft voice, "that the Cowardly Lion is in grave danger, and unless help comes before noon he will be destroyed."

"Wha-aat?" shrieked Notta in horrified tones, while Sir Hokus of Pokes began sharpening his dagger on his leg and the scarecrow fell on his nose from the very shock of the thing.

"Where's my Magic Belt?" cried Ozma, clapping her small hands frantically. "Jellia, fetch my Magic Belt!" Ozma, with this belt, meant to transport as many of the company as possible to Mudge.

But before the little serving maid returned, Notta himself had accomplished that very thing. Glancing around hurriedly, he began touching everyone who looked as if he might prove useful in a battle. Sir Hokus vanished first, for Notta was very much impressed by the Knight's warlike appearance, then the Tin Woodman, because his ax looked so sharp, then Tik Tok, because he was so solid and dependable, then Glinda because she was a sorceress and the Wizard because he was also versed in magic, then Dorothy, because she was crying and Bob because Notta could not bear to leave him behind and then Snorer, because he had proven himself so faithful. Ozma, who had forgotten about the magic verse, was startled almost out of her senses by these sudden disappearances. She put up her scepter to object, but Notta ran forward and touched her too and she was gone with the others.

"Help!" wailed Scraps, tumbling out of the window, and the rest of the company began backing into corners. But the clown, now satisfied with his army of invasion, seized the yellow hand of the Scarecrow and repeated his verse for the last time:

"Udge! Budge! Come to Mudge! Udgers Budgers, We are Mudgers!"

In a flash they were in Mudge-every single person the clown had touched. And the sight that met their eyes was simply terrifying.

CHAPTER 20 The Cowardly Lion's Peril

To understand how the Cowardly Lion made the journey to Mudge in one day instead of three, we must go back to the afternoon he started down the mountain with the Stone Man of Oz. Crunch, as he tramped along beside the Cowardly Lion, was thinking harder than in all the stone ages of his hard life. The Wizard Wam had given him brains of a sort, and though they had not been used before the events of the afternoon had brought them quite suddenly into action. The mountain where Crunch had stood for so many centuries, while quite near the Emerald City, was never visited by anyone; so that the Stone Man knew very little of life as it was lived in Oz. Notta's suggestions had aroused his curiosity, and for the Cowardly Lion he was developing a great fondness. As the afternoon progressed the Cowardly Lion grew positively embarrassed by his terms of endearment.

"You are the handsomest creature in Oz," insisted Crunch over and over, "and if you were only of stone you would be more beautiful still."

"Very still," rumbled the Cowardly Lion, putting back his ears. "Though I suppose," he added thoughtfully, "a stone lion is never afraid." To change the subject he began telling Crunch about his cowardice, and how he had started out originally to find himself some courage.

"Would it make you happy to be afraid of nothing?" asked the Stone Man in his grinding voice.

"Perfectly happy," sighed the Cowardly Lion, "for though I fight when danger threatens; I

suffer terribly from a desire to run away."

"Then if you had no desire to run away you would be perfectly happy?" asked Crunch, with a stamp that threw the Cowardly Lion off his feet. "Why, I can easily fix that!"

"Do you mean to say you could give me courage?" roared the Cowardly Lion, stopping perfectly still in his tracks.

"I know a trick to fix you so that you will never again be afraid," answered the Stone Man, rolling his eyes from side to side. "That is one thing I can do."

"Who taught you magic?" rumbled the Cowardly Lion suspiciously.

"No one," grated Crunch, "but this hard little secret was in the brains Wam wished into my block head. Shall I change you now?"

The Cowardly Lion sat down and scratched his ear with his hind leg. He had lived long enough in a magic country to believe anything Possible, but somehow this huge, craggy giant filled him with misgivings.

"I'd like to think about this a little longer, if you don't mind," he answered cautiously. "Tell me more about it, can't you?"

Crunch shook his head solemnly. "If I told you it wouldn't work. Better let me change you, old fellow."

"No," wheezed the Cowardly Lion uneasily, "I think I'll wait a bit. I tell you," he added, brightening up, "let's not try it until this little Mudge affair is over. It isn't quite right to think of ourselves when my good friend Notta is in danger. Help me first and change me afterward."

"All right," agreed the Stone Man, starting stolidly forward, but several times the Cowardly Lion, glancing up unexpectedly, caught him moving his stiff lips and looking at him with such a stony glare that it sent a shiver of terror down his spine.

"Now, see here," roared the lion, planting himself determinedly in Crunch's path. "You must promise me not to try that trick till I'm ready. I've been frightened all my life and I don't wish to be frightened into a courageous lion without knowing it."

"Oh, all right," grumbled the Stone Man again, "but I don't see any sense in all this delay. What if your friends do turn blue? It won't hurt them, and why should you put yourself in the clutches of this wicked old Mudger?"

"That is my affair," roared the Cowardly Lion, shocked at Crunch's unfeeling words. "I suppose a person entirely composed of stone cannot help being hard and unsympathetic," he reflected to himself. Aloud he called, "Come along, let's hurry," and hurry they did as fast as their legs would carry them.

A Munchkin farmer, whose cottage they passed just at dusk, gave the Cowardly Lion a hearty dinner, but he shook his head doubtfully at Crunch, who had propped himself up against a barn while the lion ate.

"He'll break something," whispered the farmer nervously. "He's too heavy to be walking about. What's he doing alive anyway? Has Ozma seen him? Or the Scarecrow? Here, here!" he called angrily, as the barn began to creak and lean to one side, "you'll have to lean against something else!"

"I'll stand right here, and nothing will budge me," grumbled Crunch disagreeably. At this the Cowardly Lion swallowed the rest of his dinner at one gulp and started to run down the road. He knew that the Stone Man would follow him and he did not want the poor farmer's barn demolished.

"I thought you were going to help people," he roared reproachfully, as Crunch overtook him. "No, I've changed my mind," announced Crunch with a terrible grin, "I'm only going to help you." The Cowardly Lion started to lecture the Stone Man, but, as he paid not the slightest attention, he finally gave it up and trotted along in silence. He was growing wearier every minute, and finally on the edge of a little wood he stopped altogether. Night was coming on, and after the flights and excitement of the past two days the Cowardly Lion felt he must snatch a little rest.

"Crunch, old rock, will you keep watch while I get a little sleep?" he yawned. The Stone Man nodded impassively. He had watched men sleep in the long ago stone age and, though he could not see any use in this strange custom, he concluded it was another tiresome habit of these creatures not brought to life by magic.

With a long sigh, for he sadly missed his jolly companions, the Cowardly Lion stretched himself out under a tree and almost instantly fell into a heavy slumber. For a time the Stone Man stood perfectly still. Then he began to mutter crossly to himself. The idea of waiting until they reached Mudge to try his trick was not pleasing to the stony fellow, for after the change, though he had been careful not to say so, the Cowardly Lion would be absolutely in his power. And, with the Cowardly Lion, he meant to return to his lonely mountain and stand happily ever afterward. Already the thought of offering his services to the Queen and building a city had begun to bore him. This pounding about chipped his toes and jarred his granite. Why had he ever made that ridiculous promise to the Cowardly Lion? But made it was, and a Stone Man can no sooner break his promise than his head. Kicking the earth up fretfully, Crunch tried to think of a way out of the difficulty. Just as the twentieth star came pricking out in the heavens, he had an idea. Crunch, being of stone, never tired and could therefore travel indefinitely. If this Mudge business had to be got through with, then the sooner they arrived in Mudge the better. He knew that he could go three times as quickly as an ordinary flesh and bone man, therefore he ought to reach Mustafa's Kingdom by morning.

Snatching into the air a startled Munchkin shepherd, who was strolling along with his hands in his pockets, he asked him the way to Mudge. When the lad's teeth stopped chattering long enough to tell him, he dropped him carelessly on the ground and picked up the Cowardly Lion. The next instant he was running with all his might toward Mustafa's dreadful desert, trampling under his feet any fences or small buildings that got in the way, and jarring the whole country with his heavy strides. The Cowardly Lion awakened almost immediately and tried to wriggle out of his grasp, but escape from those mighty arms was an impossibility.

"Where are you going?" he growled angrily, the words being fairly jolted out of him.

"To Mudge!" shouted Crunch without slackening his speed. "I promised not to change you to a courageous lion till we finished with Mustafa. Well, now, I am going to finish Mustafa."

"Stop!" implored the Cowardly Lion, but he might as well have argued with the wind, and to continue the argument, when Crunch's every step deprived him of his breath, took the whole of his strength and determination. But continue it he did, with roars, threats and rumblings. To these the Stone

Man paid not the slightest attention, and finally the Cowardly Lion was too exhausted and shaken to utter another roar.

"There's no use reasoning with me," Crunch had insisted stubbornly, "for I am a hard mass of mineral matter. I will take you to Mudge because that I promised to do, but as soon as we reach Mudge you will be mine forever!"

The Cowardly Lion had not even strength to tremble at these awful words, so he closed his eyes and tried not to think about Mustafa and his nine thousand nine hundred and ninety-nine lions, nor Crunch and his terrible threat. It would be impossible for Notta and Bob to reach Mudge in time to help him now, so the poor Cowardly Lion resolved to fight as long as he could, and then bravely resign himself to whatever fate had in Store for him. At every step of the Stone Man, he more bitterly regretted the moment he had trusted himself to the company of this treacherous giant.

Whether he fell asleep, or was shaken into unconsciousness, the Cowardly Lion never knew. The next thing he remembered was leaning up against an iron enclosure and hearing Crunch calling loudly for admittance into Mudge. For the Stone Man had run, without turning so much as an inch out of the way, directly to the land of the Mudgers.

The sun was high in the Heavens, and winds from Mustafa's desert blew hotly in their faces. The Mudger Guard, hearing the terrible clamor, came running to see who was hammering on the gates, and when they saw Crunch and the Cowardly Lion they turned and flew toward their master's striped tent.

Mustafa, still gazing fixedly at his ring, hardly heard their terrified description of the stone giant. All that he heard was the wonderful news that a lion, undoubtedly the Cowardly Lion of Oz, had at last been delivered into his power. Calling Panapee, and running so fast he lost both of his sandals, Mustafa rushed out to the lion enclosure and with trembling hands unlocked the gates. Fortunately the nine thousand nine hundred and ninety-nine lions were in another part, and when he waved for Crunch and the Cowardly Lion to enter, they did so without disturbing Mustafa's ferocious pets. The Cowardly Lion wobbled slightly, for he was still shaken by his terrible journey, but the Stone Man tramped defiantly toward the blue whiskered monarch of Mudge.

"Welcome!" wheezed Mustafa, waving his scimitar. Panny, with an outraged glance at the Stone Man, climbed the nearest palm tree.

"I understand you wished to have me captured," growled the Cowardly Lion, trembling slightly, but resolved to go through with this disagreeable business.

"Don't say captured," cried Mustafa slyly. "Let us say that I wished to have my court honored by your cowardly and perfect presence. I understand you are a terrible fighter," he added, tugging at his whiskers joyfully.

"Shall I crush or crumble him?" asked Crunch, interrupting Mustafa's further remarks and ramblings. And then Mustafa for the first time became really aware of the Stone Man. The more he exclaimed, the more horribly aware of him he became.

"Panny!" he shrilled, looking all around for his chief chamberlain, "Panny, call out the Guard!"

"Call them out yourself," chattered the trembling chamberlain, frightened out of his usual submissiveness. "I'll not stir from this tree." Crunch made a snatch at Mustafa, but the Cowardly Lion

hastily intervened. Wicked though Mustafa had been, the kind-hearted lion was not going to stand by and see him crushed to a crumble. He motioned for Crunch to follow him a few steps aside and quite sulkily the Stone Man obeyed.

"This is my fight," puffed the Cowardly Lion. "Now be a good fellow and keep out of it till I need you."

"How long will it take?" grated Crunch, slightly mollified. To tell the truth, he wanted to think over the formula needed to change the Cowardly Lion. One of the magic words had slipped his stone memory.

"Oh, an hour or two," answered the lion uneasily, determined, if he could, to escape from both of these treacherous villains.

"All right, old fellow." Crunch smiled as he said this. He felt he could afford to be generous, for in a few hours the Cowardly Lion would belong to him for good. So he leaned stolidly against the enclosure, while the Cowardly Lion hurried after Mustafa, who was running in a cloud of sand toward his tent.

"Where's that animated tombstone?" gasped Mustafa, sinking down on his throne. "Outside," panted the Cowardly Lion, too tired to notice the signal that passed between Mustafa and two Guardsmen in the opening of the tent. In an instant a gold collar and chain had been clapped 'round his tawny neck.

"Now then," exulted Mustafa, "who says you're not captured." Forgetting all about the Stone Man and his threats, he bade the two Guardsmen drag the Cowardly Lion to the royal enclosure. As they left through an opening in another side of the tent, Crunch knew nothing of their going. The Cowardly Lion planted all four feet and roared terribly but six more Guardsmen came to help the others and ignominiously he was dragged along.

"Now we shall see a famous fight, and discover whether this Cowardly Lion is as brave as he is said to be," chuckled Mustafa, shuffling along beside him. The part of the enclosure to which they were taking the lion was widened out into a regular arena. Already the nine thousand nine hundred and ninety-nine lions, with noses pressed against the bars, were watching the approach of their rival. For Mustafa had talked so long and tiresomely of the Cowardly Lion, who was coming to fight the whole company of them, that they considered him an enemy to be destroyed upon the spot. They did not have long to wait, for while two Guardsmen opened the gates of the enclosure, six more with the ends of their scimitars urged the Cowardly Lion forward. Stars! What an array of eyes, tails and gleaming teeth! What a thunder of savage growls, roars and rumbles!

Before they made a spring at the Cowardly Lion an unexpected interruption startled them. It was Sir Hokus of Pokes, falling down like a ton of kitchen tins beside the monarch of Mudge. And before the lions had stopped blinking at that, down rattled the Tin Woodman and Tik Tok, Glinda and the little Wizard of Oz, followed by Dorothy, Snorer and Bob and last of all, Ozma, the Scarecrow and Notta Bit More.

"Help!" screeched the Guards running in every direction.

"It's raining royalty!" shrilled Tazzywaller, who had sneaked out to witness the fight. "Fly for your life!" The fat little lion feeder tugged at Mustafa's robe, for he had at once recognized Princess Dorothy and Ozma of Oz. But before Mustafa could flee, or the company from the Emerald City had

caught their breath, Mustafa's lions, recovering from the shock of so many fallers, sprang with nine thousand different dreadful roars toward the Cowardly Lion.

Dorothy screamed and the Scarecrow recklessly tried to squeeze himself through the bars, but before anyone from the Emerald City could raise a hand, Crunch, aroused by the thumps and roars, came pounding upon the scene. Just as the Cowardly Lion crouched to meet the overwhelming rush of Mustafa's lions, the Stone Man held up his arm and shouted seven magic words!

CHAPTER 21 Oz Magic Triumphs

SEVEN magic words! No sooner were they uttered than the nine thousand nine hundred and ninety-nine lions were turned to so many stone statues-some just as they were about to spring, some half way in the air, so that they came clattering heavily down one on top of the other, and the poor Cowardly Lion at the bottom of the heap!

"Somebody stop him!" gasped Ozma who was sitting exactly as she had fallen on a small sand dune. Sir Hokus of Pokes sprang bravely at Crunch, but his sword snapped at the first thrust, and the Stone Man, paying no more attention to the people from the Emerald City than if they had been so many flies, began bending out the iron bars of the lion enclosure. Mustafa, petrified with terror, might have been a statue himself, and the Mudger Guards had long since taken to their heels.

"What have you done?" wailed Notta, trying to attract the Stone Man's attention. He seized an iron bar that Crunch had loosened and began valiantly belaboring Crunch about the shins.

"Oh, hello!" rasped Crunch, glancing down at the clown. "Back again? Well, I've taken your advice, you see.

"My advice!" groaned Notta.

"Yes." Crunch, who had now broken an opening for himself, stepped into the enclosure.

"I've helped the Cowardly Lion by changing him to stone. Now he will never feel cowardly again, and what's more, he belongs to me!" Leaning over, he began tossing Mustafa's lions aside as if they had been so many paper weights.

"Oh, help!" screamed Snorer. "Aren't there any wizards here to stop this fellow? Are you going to sit like images while he runs off with the bravest lion in Oz?"

"I must think!" groaned the Scarecrow, putting his white cotton glove to his head, while Dorothy and Bob ran close to the bars and looked anxiously for the first glimpse of their old friend. But Glinda and the Wizard of Oz already had their heads together. "First," whispered the little Wizard of Oz, "we will let him find the Cowardly Lion, for those statues would be too heavy for us to lift. Then, we will deprive him of all power to move.

Tik Tok and Sir Hokus had followed the Stone Man into the enclosure, but a stone lion flung carelessly to one side, knocked Tik Tok head over heels, and Sir Hokus, deciding that flight was the better part of valor, retired to a safe distance, where he began threatening the Stone Man with every sort

of destruction from hammering to hanging. But Crunch continued calmly tossing the lions about, and at last uncovered the Cowardly Lion himself. He recognized him at once, for his mane, a mass of stony waves, stood straight on end. The Cowardly Lion, you see, had been petrified in one of his most trying moments, and, while he was preparing to fight with all his might, he could not control his mane and hence looked as natural as possible.

Dorothy could not help crying as Crunch tucked this lifelike image of her old chum under his arm and prepared to tramp off. But he got no further than two steps, for at the second step the combined magic of Glinda and the Wizard of Oz deprived him of all power to move. Crunch dropped the Cowardly Lion with a crash that chipped off a piece of his mane, and with one foot raised in the air stood perfectly motionless. The Stone Man was no longer alive!

"Oh!" cried Notta, frightened by the ease with which Glinda had deprived the stone giant of life, "who will bring the Cowardly Lion to himself again?" And at once everyone ran over to the poor petrified lion, and tugging and pulling, managed to get him to his feet.

"It was the only thing we could do," puffed the little Wizard of Oz, gazing up worriedly at the huge statue of Crunch. "He did not know how to use the gift of life, and would only have brought more trouble upon us."

"Isn't this trouble enough?" cried Dorothy, throwing her arms around the cold, still figure of the Cowardly Lion.

"There, there, my dear! Glinda will find a way out of all this," comforted the Scarecrow, and Notta and Bob joined him in his efforts to console the little girl, while Sir Hokus and the Tin Woodman ran to help Tik Tok to his feet.

"All this has happened because of you!" declared Ozma, stamping her foot for the first time in her gentle little life, and looking sternly at Mustafa.

"And for a punishment," she pointed at the huge, craggy figure of Crunch, "for a punishment this Stone Man shall stand forever in Mudge, a monument to your greediness and folly."

"Take away his ring," whispered Bob, tiptoeing up to the little fairy ruler, for he had seen Mustafa slyly beginning to take it off and Bob knew its dreadful power. Without losing a minute, Ozma commanded Mustafa to hand over the ring. Tremblingly, the wretched old Mudger obeyed. So much had happened in the last few minutes, he was positively stunned by his misfortune. Not only had he offended the ruler of all Oz, lost the Cowardly Lion and his ring, but all of his other lions were turned to stone. Jerking his turban over one eye, the miserable monarch shuffled mournfully to his tent, and no one cared enough to stop him. Then, as the whole party was heartily disgusted with the hot, desert city of the Mudgers, Glinda, by a quick transportation phrase, wished them all safely back to the Emerald City.

There, for several hours Glinda, the Wizard of Oz, and Ozma worked over the Cowardly Lion, but all of their magic failed to undo the Stone Man's spell, and it looked as if the huge beast would have to spend the rest of his life as a garden ornament. Twenty of the palace servants bore him down the steps and placed him gently in the center of a large flower bed, and all the inhabitants of the city came and gazed sadly at their once lively and cowardly comrade.

"He is the image of himself," choked the Scarecrow, hanging a wreath of daisies round his neck, which was still adorned with Mustafa's gold collar.

"But I don't want an image," cried Princess Dorothy and, climbing on the Cowardly Lion's stone back, she cried as if her heart would break. Notta and Bob were too overcome by this dreadful misfortune to think about themselves. It did not even seem right to enjoy the lovely sights in the Emerald City, so the clown and little boy sat on a bench in the garden and gazed sorrowfully at the monument of their faithful old friend.

Then, all at once Bob jumped up with a little shout. "Look," he cried, waving his cap joyfully. "Look! He's coming alive again!" And so he was! For tears are more magic than anything else, when it comes to melting stone, and every spot where Dorothy's tears fell was beginning to quiver with life. When Notta ran to the palace with the news, the excitement was tremendous. Everyone, from Ozma down to the littlest kitchen maid, came to weep over the Cowardly Lion, and bring him back to life. The Tin Woodman cried a perfect torrent of tears and quite rusted his chain. The Scarecrow and Scraps had not a tear in their cotton constitutions, but Snorer made up for this by crying enough for three. Everybody cried, and in less than a minute the dear, old kind-hearted lion opened his eyes. Shaking himself sleepily, he looked inquiringly at the weeping company and wanted to know what was the matter. All talking at once, and each trying to hug him first, they explained what had happened. The Cowardly Lion remembered nothing after being pushed into the lion enclosure. You can well imagine his relief when he discovered what a hard and horrible fate he had escaped.

"All this comes of my foolish wish for courage," roared the Cowardly Lion, shaking his mane, which was quite perfect except for the piece Crunch had broken off. "I would rather be a Cowardly Lion for five minutes than a stone lion for a century. Why, a stone lion has not enough sense to be frightened."

"Hurrah for the Cowardly Lion of Oz!" shouted the Scarecrow, and Bob Up, who felt more at home among these odd and friendly people than he had ever felt anywhere in his life, climbed on the Cowardly Lion's back and hugged him with both arms. Dorothy hopped up again too, and in triumph they all trooped back to the throne room.

CHAPTER 22 A Happy Home in Oz

"AND now," sighed the little Queen of Oz, sinking down among the soft cushions of her emerald throne, "let's have the whole story!" Nothing could have exceeded her amazement, as Notta told of their marvelous adventures in Oz of Doorways and Un and Preserva the Great, of the Flyaboutabus and the Fiddlebow Boat. Dorothy was so curious about the Skyle of Un that they all ran to look in Ozma's Magic Picture, which shows any place or person one wishes to see. "Show us the Uns," commanded Ozma breathlessly, and Bob and Notta almost tumbled over backwards when the Magic Picture showed them I-wish-I-was and his Featherheads. A great battle was in progress, for I-wish-I-was was furious at the loss of the Flyaboutabus. The Guards and their friends on one side and the wicked ruler on the other were fighting tumultuously.

Sticks and feathers were flying in every direction and they were even pulling down their tree houses.

Ozma shook her head gravely, but Bob Up, who had been thinking about the only good Un ever since they left the skyland, suddenly remembered his name and triumphantly whispered it to Ozma. Instantly Ozma, with the help of Glinda and the Wizard, commanded the good Un to come out from his hiding and sit upon the throne. The fighting ceased at once and the Uns began to look at one another with

puzzled expressions, as if they could not remember what they had been quarreling about. Bob and Notta and the Cowardly Lion shouted with approval, forgetting in their interest that the Uns in the picture could not hear them.

The good Un's name was Unselfish and, as Glinda assured Ozma that the skyle would thereafter be ruled wisely and well, they all returned to the throne room. After Dorothy had hugged Notta a dozen times for his devotion to the Cowardly Lion, and the clown had turned his best somersaults, told his best jokes and generally made himself so funny that everyone was doubled up with laughter, Ozma again raised her scepter for silence.

"I suppose," said the little fairy regretfully, for she had taken a great fancy to the clown and Snorer and Bob Up, "I suppose that now you are anxious to return to America."

Notta took off his cap and scratched his ear, a habit he had when puzzled or embarrassed.

"Don't go yet!" begged Dorothy, seizing the clown's arm imploringly. As for Bob Up, he retired behind an emerald pillar so that no one could see that he was crying.

"Oh, yes," cawed Snorer, flapping down from the back of a tall chair where he had been enjoying a noisy little nap. "Oh, yes, we must go to America and make our fortune. I am going to have my nose patented and teach the people there how to snore properly."

"That's right," agreed Notta soberly. "I'm a family man now and must go back and earn enough to send Bob to college, and I must save up for my old age, for clowns can't be tumbling around the country forever."

"Why, it's nothing but fun," cried Scraps, who had been quiet as long as she could contain herself.

"Not always," sighed Notta. "Making people laugh is the hardest work in the world. Look how easy it is to make them cry? But come along, Bob Up. It's high time we were going, and if this little lady will just say the magic word we'll bid you all goodbye. I must be saving up for my old age," he repeated mournfully.

When Notta was sad, he always thought about his old age, and the idea of leaving the Cowardly Lion and all of this merry and childlike company made him sad indeed. And Ozma, who is the cleverest little mind and heart reader anywhere in the world or out-Ozma guessed his secret.

"Don't go!" cried the little Queen impulsively.

"Stay with us and you won't have any old age.

Stay in Oz, dear Notta, and be happy forever."

At this the excitement was terrific. Every man, woman, child, animal, and celebrity added his or her voice to Ozma's, and when the clown, with tears in his eyes, accepted the little Queen's generous offer, they seized hands or paws, as the case might be, and danced merrily 'round Bob, Snorer and Notta Bit More.

"You shall have the jolliest cottage in Oz," promised the Scarecrow, when the excitement had subsided a bit.

"A tent would seem more homelike," whispered Notta in the cloth ear of that charming gentleman. And a tent he did have, on the outskirts of the Emerald City-a tent shared with Snorer and Bob, where, with the help of the charming and unusual inhabitants of Oz, the clown gave the most surprising shows that had ever been seen in that magical country.

Bob, in his good fortune, did not forget the half a lion, and the Wizard of Oz reunited the unfortunate creature, after bringing both halves, with the aid of Ozma's magic belt, to the Emerald City. The poor beast, whose hind quarters had fortunately escaped Crunch's stone spell, was so overjoyed to see his tail again that he raced round in circles for several hours after his reunion.

As for Mustafa, he grew amazingly rich from the sale of his stone lions, and you can see them any fine day, guarding the doors of public buildings or standing proudly in the various parks of Oz. But in spite of his great wealth, he was far from happy, for his eyes, from staring so hard at his ring, had become hopelessly crossed, and cross-eyed he remained to the end of his days. Bob Up is friends with everyone, but most of all with Button Bright, a little boy who once visited Sky Island and who could not hear enough of the Skyle of Un.

Notta has saved up enough for Bob's entire education and has gone off to confer with Professor Wogglebug, President of the College of Art and Athletic Perfection, about the future of the little boy.