

20. The Monkeys Have Trouble

"Now," said the Wizard, "we must start for home. But how are we going to carry that big gold flower-pot? Cap'n Bill can't lug it all the way, that's certain."

"No," acknowledged the sailor-man; "it's pretty heavy. I could carry it for a little while, but I'd have to stop to rest every few minutes."

"Couldn't we put it on your back?" Dorothy asked the Cowardly Lion, with a good-natured yawn.

"I don't object to carrying it, if you can fasten it on," answered the Lion.

"If it falls off," said Trot, "it might get smashed an' be ruined."

"I'll fix it," promised Cap'n Bill. "I'll make a flat board out of one of these tree trunks, an' tie the board on the lion's back, an' set the flower-pot on the board." He set to work at once to do this, but as he only had his big knife for a tool his progress was slow.

So the Wizard took from his black bag a tiny saw that shone like silver and said to it:

"Saw, Little Saw, come show your power; Make us a board for the Magic Flower."

And at once the Little Saw began to move and it sawed the log so fast that those who watched it work were astonished. It seemed to understand, too, just what the board was to be used for, for when it was completed it was flat on top and hollowed beneath in such a manner that it exactly fitted the Lion's back.

"That beats whittlin'!" exclaimed Cap'n Bill, admiringly. "You don't happen to have TWO o' them saws; do you, Wizard?"

"No," replied the Wizard, wiping the Magic Saw carefully with his silk handkerchief and putting it back in the black bag. "It's the only saw of its kind in the world; and if there were more like it, it wouldn't be so wonderful."

They now tied the board on the Lion's back, flat side up, and Cap'n Bill carefully placed the Magic Flower on the board.

"For fear o' accidents," he said, "I'll walk beside the Lion and hold onto the flower-pot."

Trot and Dorothy could both ride on the back of the Hungry Tiger, and between them they carried the cage of monkeys. But this arrangement left the Wizard, as well as the sailor, to make the journey on foot, and so the procession moved slowly and the Glass Cat grumbled because it would take so long to get to the Emerald City.

The Cat was sour-tempered and grumpy, at first, but before they had journeyed far, the crystal creature had discovered a fine amusement. The long tails of the monkeys were constantly sticking through the bars of their cage, and when they did, the Glass Cat would slyly seize the tails in her paws and pull them. That made the monkeys scream, and their screams pleased the Glass Cat immensely. Trot and Dorothy tried to stop this naughty amusement, but when they were not looking the Cat would pull the tails again, and the creature was so sly and quick that the monkeys could seldom escape. They scolded the Cat angrily and shook the bars of their cage, but they could not get out and the Cat only laughed at them.

After the party had left the forest and were on the plains of the Munchkin Country, it grew dark, and they were obliged to make camp for the night, choosing a pretty place beside a brook. By means of his magic the Wizard created three tents, pitched in a row on the grass and nicely fitted with all that was needful for the comfort of his comrades. The middle tent was for Dorothy and Trot, and had in it two cosy white beds and two chairs. Another tent, also with beds and chairs, was for the Wizard and Cap'n Bill, while the third tent was for the Hungry Tiger, the Cowardly Lion, the cage of Monkeys and the Glass Cat. Outside the tents the Wizard made a fire and placed over it a magic kettle from which he presently drew all sorts of nice things for their supper, smoking hot.

After they had eaten and talked together for a while under the twinkling stars, they all went to bed and the people were soon asleep. The Lion and the Tiger had almost fallen asleep, too, when they were roused by the screams of the monkeys, for the Glass Cat was pulling their tails again. Annoyed by the uproar, the Hungry Tiger cried: "Stop that racket!" and getting sight of the Glass Cat, he raised his big paw and struck at the creature. The cat was

quick enough to dodge the blow, but the claws of the Hungry Tiger scraped the monkey's cage and bent two of the bars.

Then the Tiger lay down again to sleep, but the monkeys soon discovered that the bending of the bars would allow them to squeeze through. They did not leave the cage, however, but after whispering together they let their tails stick out and all remained quiet. Presently the Glass Cat stole near the cage again and gave a yank to one of the tails. Instantly the monkeys leaped through the bars, one after another, and although they were so small the entire dozen of them surrounded the Glass Cat and clung to her claws and tail and ears and made her a prisoner. Then they forced her out of the tent and down to the banks of the stream. The monkeys had noticed that these banks were covered with thick, slimy mud of a dark blue color, and when they had taken the Cat to the stream, they smeared this mud all over the glass body of the cat, filling the creature's ears and eyes with it, so that she could neither see nor hear. She was no longer transparent and so thick was the mud upon her that no one could see her pink brains or her ruby heart.

In this condition they led the pussy back to the tent and then got inside their cage again.

By morning the mud had dried hard on the Glass Cat and it was a dull blue color throughout. Dorothy and Trot were horrified, but the Wizard shook his head and said it served the Glass Cat right for teasing the monkeys.

Cap'n Bill, with his strong hands, soon bent the golden wires of the monkeys' cage into the proper position and then he asked the Wizard if he should wash the Glass Cat in the water of the brook.

"Not just yet," answered the Wizard. "The Cat deserves to be punished, so I think I'll leave that blue mud--which is as bad as paint--upon her body until she gets to the Emerald City. The silly creature is so vain that she will be greatly shamed when the Oz people see her in this condition, and perhaps she'll take the lesson to heart and leave the monkeys alone hereafter."

However, the Glass Cat could not see or hear, and to avoid carrying her on the journey the Wizard picked the mud out of her eyes and ears and Dorothy dampened her handkerchief and washed both the eyes and ears clean.

As soon as she could speak the Glass Cat asked indignantly: "Aren't you going to punish those monkeys for playing such a trick on me?"

"No," answered the Wizard. "You played a trick on them by pulling their tails, so this is only tit-for-tat, and I'm glad the monkeys had their revenge."

He wouldn't allow the Glass Cat to go near the water, to wash herself, but made her follow them when they resumed their journey toward the Emerald City.

"This is only part of your punishment," said the Wizard, severely. "Ozma will laugh at you, when we get to her palace, and so will the Scarecrow, and the Tin Woodman, and Tik-Tok, and the Shaggy Man, and Button-Bright, and the Patchwork Girl, and--"

"And the Pink Kitten," added Dorothy.

That suggestion hurt the Glass Cat more than anything else. The Pink Kitten always quarreled with the Glass Cat and insisted that flesh was superior to glass, while the Glass Cat would jeer at the Pink Kitten, because it had no pink brains. But the pink brains were all daubed with blue mud, just now, and if the Pink Kitten should see the Glass Cat in such a condition, it would be dreadfully humiliating.

For several hours the Glass Cat walked along very meekly, but toward noon it seized an opportunity when no one was looking and darted away through the long grass. It remembered that there was a tiny lake of pure water near by, and to this lake the Cat sped as fast as it could go.

The others never missed her until they stopped for lunch, and then it was too late to hunt for her.

"I s'pect she's gone somewhere to clean herself," said Dorothy.

"Never mind," replied the Wizard. "Perhaps this glass creature has been punished enough, and we must not forget she saved both Trot and Cap'n Bill."

"After first leading 'em onto an enchanted island," added Dorothy. "But I think, as you do, that the Glass Cat is punished enough, and p'raps she won't try to pull the monkeys' tails again."

The Glass Cat did not rejoin the party of travelers. She was still resentful, and they moved too slowly to suit her, besides. When they arrived at the Royal Palace, one of the first things they saw was the Glass Cat curled up on a bench as bright and clean and transparent as ever. But she pretended not to notice them, and they passed her by without remark.