

CHAPTER 19 - UGU THE SHOEMAKER

A curious thing about Ugu the Shoemaker was that he didn't suspect in the least that he was wicked. He wanted to be powerful and great, and he hoped to make himself master of all the Land of Oz that he might compel everyone in that fairy country to obey him, His ambition blinded him to the rights of others, and he imagined anyone else would act just as he did if anyone else happened to be as clever as himself.

When he inhabited his little shoemaking shop in the City of Herku, he had been discontented, for a shoemaker is not looked upon with high respect, and Ugu knew that his ancestors had been famous magicians for many centuries past and therefore his family was above the ordinary. Even his father practiced magic when Ugu was a boy, but his father had wandered away from Herku and had never come back again. So when Ugu grew up, he was forced to make shoes for a living, knowing nothing of the magic of his forefathers. But one day, in searching through the attic of his house, he discovered all the books of magical recipes and many magical instruments which had formerly been in use in his family. From that day, he stopped making shoes and began to study magic. Finally, he aspired to become the greatest magician in Oz, and for days and weeks and months he thought on a plan to render all the other sorcerers and wizards, as well as those with fairy powers, helpless to oppose him.

From the books of his ancestors, he learned the following facts:

- (1) That Ozma of Oz was the fairy ruler of the Emerald City and the Land of Oz and that she could not be destroyed by any magic ever devised. Also, by means of her Magic Picture she would be able to discover anyone who approached her royal palace with the idea of conquering it.
- (2) That Glinda the Good was the most powerful Sorceress in Oz, among her other magical possessions being the Great Book of Records, which told her all that happened anywhere in the world. This Book of Records was very dangerous to Ugu's plans, and Glinda was in the service of Ozma and would use her arts of sorcery to protect the girl Ruler.
- (3) That the Wizard of Oz, who lived in Ozma's palace, had been taught much powerful magic by Glinda and had a bag of magic tools with which he might be able to conquer the Shoemaker.

(4) That there existed in Oz--in the Yip Country--a jeweled dishpan made of gold, which dishpan would grow large enough for a man to sit inside it. Then, when he grasped both the golden handles, the dishpan would transport him in an instant to any place he wished to go within the borders of the Land of Oz.

No one now living except Ugu knew of the powers of the Magic Dishpan, so after long study, the shoemaker decided that if he could manage to secure the dishpan, he could by its means rob Ozma and Glinda and the Wizard of Oz of all their magic, thus becoming himself the most powerful person in all the land. His first act was to go away from the City of Herku and build for himself the Wicker Castle in the hills. Here he carried his books and instruments of magic, and here for a full year he diligently practiced all the magical arts learned from his ancestors. At the end of that time, he could do a good many wonderful things.

Then, when all his preparations were made, he set out for the Yip Country, and climbing the steep mountain at night he entered the house of Cayke the Cookie Cook and stole her diamond-studded gold dishpan while all the Yips were asleep, Taking his prize outside, he set the pan upon the ground and uttered the required magic word. Instantly, the dishpan grew as large as a big washtub, and Ugu seated himself in it and grasped the two handles. Then he wished himself in the great drawing room of Glinda the Good.

He was there in a flash. First he took the Great Book of Records and put it in the dishpan. Then he went to Glinda's laboratory and took all her rare chemical compounds and her instruments of sorcery, placing these also in the dishpan, which he caused to grow large enough to hold them. Next he seated himself amongst the treasures he had stolen and wished himself in the room in Ozma's palace which the Wizard occupied and where he kept his bag of magic tools. This bag Ugu added to his plunder and then wished himself in the apartments of Ozma.

Here he first took the Magic Picture from the wall and then seized all the other magical things which Ozma possessed. Having placed these in the dishpan, he was about to climb in himself when he looked up and saw Ozma standing beside him. Her fairy instinct had warned her that danger was threatening her, so the beautiful girl Ruler rose from her couch and leaving her bedchamber at once confronted the thief.

Ugu had to think quickly, for he realized that if he permitted Ozma to rouse the inmates of her palace, all his plans and his present successes were likely to come to naught. So he threw a scarf over the girl's head so she could not

scream, and pushed her into the dishpan and tied her fast so she could not move. Then he climbed in beside her and wished himself in his own wicker castle. The Magic Dishpan was there in an instant, with all its contents, and Ugu rubbed his hands together in triumphant joy as he realized that he now possessed all the important magic in the Land of Oz and could force all the inhabitants of that fairyland to do as he willed.

So quickly had his journey been accomplished that before daylight the robber magician had locked Ozma in a room, making her a prisoner, and had unpacked and arranged all his stolen goods. The next day he placed the Book of Records on his table and hung the Magic Picture on his wall and put away in his cupboards and drawers all the elixirs and magic compounds he had stolen. The magical instruments he polished and arranged, and this was fascinating work and made him very happy.

By turns the imprisoned Ruler wept and scolded the Shoemaker, haughtily threatening him with dire punishment for the wicked deeds he had done. Ugu became somewhat afraid of his fairy prisoner, in spite of the fact that he believed he had robbed her of all her powers; so he performed an enchantment that quickly disposed of her and placed her out of his sight and hearing. After that, being occupied with other things, he soon forgot her.

But now, when he looked into the Magic Picture and read the Great Book of Records, the Shoemaker learned that his wickedness was not to go unchallenged. Two important expeditions had set out to find him and force him to give up his stolen property. One was the party headed by the Wizard and Dorothy, while the other consisted of Cayke and the Frogman. Others were also searching, but not in the right places. These two groups, however, were headed straight for the wicker castle, and so Ugu began to plan how best to meet them and to defeat their efforts to conquer him.