

CLASSICS TO GO



HANDY MANDY IN OZ

RUTH PLUMLY THOMPSON

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Ruth Plumly Thompson

Hello there!

Another spring, another book and another old Wizard in Oz! Imagine! And with Ruggedo mixed up in the story there's bound to be fun and excitement.

Now I do hope you like Handy Mandy and Nox. I'm very fond of the Royal Ox, myself. He rather reminds me of Kabumpo, while Kerry is as nice a young King as I've met in an Oz age. But tell me what YOU think. No one, not even Ozma, receives as fine letters as you all write me, and I can hardly wait to hear all this year's news and those interesting Ozzy suggestions. My news comes from the palace of the Red Jinn, today. It seems that he and Kabumpo are really going to pay that long-promised visit to Randy in Regalia. My—y, I'll have to look into this. Meanwhile, best and merriest wishes and a high old happy-go-lucky year to you!

RUTH PLUMLY THOMPSON.

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This book is lovingly dedicated to all
the boys and girls who have written
me letters! Yes, here's to YOU and
cheers to you!

RUTH PLUMLY THOMPSON

April, 1937



Handy Mandy in Oz

On many a day had Handy, the Goat Girl of Mern, pursued her goats up and down the rocky eminences of her native mountain. And never—NEVER—in her fourteen or so years' experience had she been blown up by a mountain spring. But there comes, in every one's experience a day which is unlike every other day, and so it was with the Goat Girl. As she was pursuing What-a-butter, her favorite goat, there was a sudden crash, a whish, and up flew the slab of rock on which she was standing, up and away.

The adventures into which she was carried by this simple though awefull beginning take a whole book to relate. How she met Nox the Royal Ox of Keretaria, how together they went in search of little King Kerry, how at last they rescued him and found themselves feted guests of Ozma of Oz, all these things you must read for yourselves.

Read what the University of Washington Chapbooks have to say about the famous Oz series. They *have taught American children to look for the elements of wonder in the life around them, to realize that even smoke and machinery may be transformed into fairy lore if only we have sufficient energy and vision to penetrate to their significance and transform them to our use.... Some day we may have better fairytales but that will not be until America is a better country.* (Edward Wagenknecht.)

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CHAPTER 1

Mandy Leaves the Mountain

"What-a-BUTTER! What-a-BUTTER!" High and clear above the peaks of Mt. Mern floated the voice of the Goat Girl calling the finest, fattest but most troublesome of her flock. All the other goats were winding obediently down toward the village that perched precariously on the edge of the mountain. But of What-a-butter there was not a single sign nor whisker.

"Serves me right for spoiling the contrary creature," panted Mandy, pushing back her thick yellow braids with her second best hand. "Always wants her own way, that goat—so she does. What-a-butter, I say WHAT-A-BUTTER—come down here this instant." But only the tantalizing tinkle of the goat's silver bell came to answer her, for What-a-butter was climbing up, not down, and there was nothing for Mandy to do but go after her.

Muttering dire threats which she was much too soft hearted ever to carry out, the rosy cheeked mountain lass scrambled over crags and stones, pulling herself up steep precipices, the goat always managing to keep a few jumps ahead, till soon they were almost at the top of the mountain!

Here, stopping on a jutting rock to catch her breath and remove the burrs from her stockings, Mandy heard a dreadful roar and felt an ominous rumbling beneath her feet. What-a-butter on a narrow ledge just above heard it too, and cocked her head anxiously on one side. Perhaps she had best jump down to Mandy. After all, the great silly girl did feed and pet her, and from the sound of things a storm was brewing. If there was one thing the goat feared

more than another, it was a thunder-storm, so, rolling her eyes as innocently as if she had not dragged Mandy all over the mountain she stretched her nose down toward her weary mistress.

"Bah—ah-ah-ahhhhhhhhhh!" bleated What-a-butter affectionately.

"Oh 'Bah' yourself!" fumed Mandy, making an angry snatch for the Nanny Goat's beard. "Pets and children are all alike—never appreciate a body till they have a stomach ache, or a thunder-storm is coming. Now then, m'lass, be quick with you!"

Holding out her strong arms, Mandy made ready to catch the goat as it jumped off the ledge. But before What-a-butter could stir, there was a perfectly awful crash and explosion and up shot the slab of rock on which Mandy was standing, up—UP and out of sight entirely. Where the mountain girl had been, a crystal column of water spurted viciously into the air, so high the bulging eyes of the goat could see no end to it. Rearing up on her hind legs, What-a-butter turned round and round in a frantic effort to catch a glimpse of her vanishing Mistress. Then thinking suddenly what would happen should the torrent turn and fall upon her, the goat sprang off the ledge and ran madly down the mountain, bleating like a whole herd of Banshees.

And Mandy, as you can well believe, was as frightened as What-a-butter and with twice as much reason. The first upheaval, as the rock left the earth, flung her flat on her nose. Grasping the edges of the slab with all hands, Mandy hung on for dear life and as a stinging shower of icy water sprayed her from head to foot, wondered what under the earth was happening to her. Thorns and thistles! Could the thunder-storm really have come UP instead of down? Certainly it was raining up, and what ever was carrying her aloft with such terrible force and relentlessness?



How could the Goat Girl know that a turbulent spring pent up for thousands of years in the center of Mt. Mern had suddenly burst its way to freedom! And you have no idea of the tremendous power in a mountain spring once it uncoils and lets itself go. Mandy's rock might just as well have been shot into the air by a magic cannon. First it tore upward as if it meant to knock a hole in the sky, then, still travelling at incalculable speed, began to arch and take a horizontal course over the mountains, hills and valleys west of Mern. All poor Mandy knew was that she was hurtling through space at break-neck speed with nothing to save or stop her. The long yellow braids of the Goat Girl streamed out like pennants, while her striped skirt and voluminous petticoats snapped and fluttered like banners in the wind.

"What-a-butter! Oh What-a-butter!" moaned Mandy, gazing wildly over the edge of the rock. But pshaw, what was the use of calling? What-a-butter, even if she heard, could not fly after her through the air, and when she herself came down not even her own goat would recognize her. At this depressing thought, Mandy dropped her head on her arms

and began to weep bitterly, for she was quite sure she would never see her friends—her home—or her goats again.

But the rough and frugal life on Mt. Mern had made the Goat Girl both brave and resourceful, so she soon dried her tears and as the rock still showed no signs of slowing up nor dashing down, she began to take heart and even a desperate sort of interest in her experience. Slowly and cautiously she pulled herself to a sitting position and still clutching the edges of the rock, dared to look down at the countries and towns flashing away below.



"After all," sniffed the reckless maiden, "nothing very dreadful has happened yet. I've always wanted to travel and now I AM travelling. Not many people have flown through the air on a rock—why it's really a rocket!" decided Mandy, with a nervous giggle. "And that, I suppose, makes me the first rocket rider in the country, and the LAST, too," she finished soberly as she measured with her eye the distance she would plunge when her rock started earthward. "Now if

we'd just come down in that blue lake, below, I might have a chance. Perhaps I should jump?"

But by the time Mandy made up her mind to jump the lake was far behind and nothing but a great desert of smoking sand stretched beneath her.



CHAPTER 2

The End of the Ride

The sky, from the rosy pink of late afternoon, had faded to a depressing grey, and Mandy could not help thinking longingly of the appetizing little supper she had set out for herself before going up to call the goats. Who would eat it now or even know she was flying through the air like a comet? No one, she concluded drearily, for Mandy was an orphan and lived all by herself in a small cottage on Mt. Mern, high above the village of Fistikins. In a day or two, some of her friends in the village might search the cottage and find her gone, but NOW, now there was nothing to do but sit tight and hope for the best.



Mandy's next glance down was more encouraging. Instead of the dangerous looking desert, she was sailing over misty

blue hills and valleys dotted with many small towns and villages. High as she was, she could even hear the church bells tolling the hour, and this made Mandy feel more lost and lonely than ever. All these people below were safely at home and about to eat their suppers while she was flying high and far from everything she knew and loved best.

Hungrily the Goat Girl cast her eyes over the rock she was riding, thinking to find a small sprig of mountain berries or even a blade of grass to nibble. At first glance, the rock seemed bare and barren, then sticking up out of a narrow crevice Mandy spied a tiny blue flower. "Poor little posy, it's as far from home as I am," murmured the Goat Girl, and carefully breaking the stem, she lifted the blue flower to her nose. Its faint fragrance was vaguely comforting and Mandy had just begun to count the petals, when the rock gave a sickening lurch and started to pitch down so fast Mandy's braids snapped like jumping ropes and her skirts bellied out like a parachute in a gale.

"NOW for it," gasped the Goat Girl closing her eyes and clenching her teeth. "OH! My poor little shins!" Mandy's shins were both stout and sturdy, but even so we cannot blame Mandy for pitying them. Stouter shins than hers would have splintered at such a fall. Hardly knowing what she was doing, Mandy began to pull the petals from the blue flower, calling in an agonized voice as she pulled each one the names of her goats and friends. She had just come to Speckle, the smallest member of her flock, when the end came.



Kimmeny Jimmeny! Was this ALL? Opening one eye, the Goat Girl looked fearfully about her. She was sitting on top of a haystack, no, not a haystack, but a heap of soft blue flower petals as soft as down. Opening the other eye she saw the rock, on which she had travelled so far, bump over a golden fence and fall with a satisfied splash into a shimmering lake. But what lay beyond the lake made Mandy forget all her troubles and fairly moan with surprise and pleasure.

"A CASTLE!" exulted the Goat Girl, putting one hand above her heart. "Oh! I've always wanted to see a castle and now I AM." And this castle, let me tell you, was well worth anyone's seeing, a castle of lacy blue marble carved, and decorated with precious stones, in a way to astonish the eyes of a simple mountain lass. From the tallest tower, a silken pennant floated lazily in the evening breeze.

"K-E-R-E-T-A-R-I-A," Mandy spelled out slowly. Sliding off the heap of flower petals she stood for a long delicious moment lost in admiration. Then, giving herself a businesslike shake

to be sure she was not broken or bent by her amazing flight and tumble, Mandy turned to examine the rest of her surroundings.

When she looked at the spot on which she had fallen the stack of blue petals had disappeared, but there, twinkling up cheerfully, was the blue flower as much at home as if it had grown there in the first place. Thoroughly puzzled, Mandy picked the little flower a second time and slipped it into the pocket of her apron.



Even without the mystery of the blue flower it was astonishing enough to find herself in the stately park of this gorgeous blue castle. There was a tree lined avenue and velvety lawns splashed with star shaped flower beds stretched in every direction. Only the small patch of land on which she was standing was bare and uncultivated. And evidently someone was at work here, for a great white ox, with golden horns, yoked to a gold plow stood with his back to Mandy, dozing cozily in the pleasant dusk.