

CLASSICS TO GO

# THE COWARDLY LION OF OZ



RUTH PLUMLY THOMPSON

# **The Cowardly Lion of Oz**

**Ruth Plumly Thompson**

# List of Chapters

- 1 [Mustafa of Mudge](#)
- 2 [Magic at the Circus](#)
- 3 [At the Court of Mudge](#)
- 4 [Mustafa's Mandate](#)
- 5 [Two Cowardly Lion Hunters](#)
- 6 [The Seven Doors](#)
- 7 [The Escape from Doorways](#)
- 8 [The Cowardly Lion's Quest](#)
- 9 [In Search of a Brave Man](#)
- 10 [On the Isle of Un](#)
- 11 [A Strange Fishing Party](#)
- 12 [Saved by a Flyaboutabus](#)
- 13 [Mustafa's Blue Magic](#)
- 14 [Flying in a Deluge](#)
- 15 [Mustafa Keeps Watch](#)
- 16 [A Fall from the Sky](#)
- 17 [The Stone Man of Oz](#)
- 18 [Notta's Last Disguise](#)
- 19 [In the Emerald City](#)
- 20 [The Cowardly Lion's Peril](#)
- 21 [Oz Magic Triumphs](#)
- 22 [A Happy Home in Oz](#)





THE COWARDLY LION ENTERTAINS THE WOOD CUTTERS WITH HIS CONVERSATION  
*Chapter 9*

# 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, Panny—a 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 troublemakers. 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.

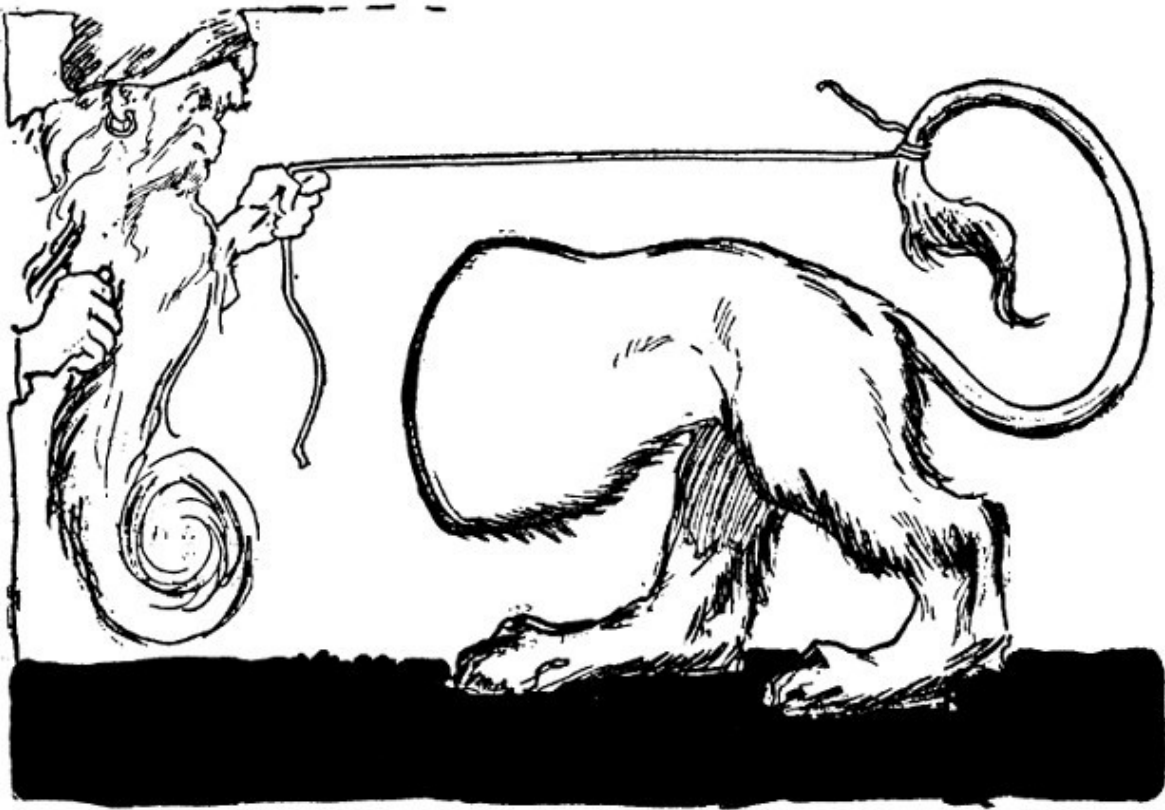
When Mustafa, who really was not a bad fellow at heart, assumed the throne he tried to divert the minds of his quarrelsome subjects by organizing hunts. There were many lions in the uninhabited parts of the desert, and for a time hunting lions kept the Mudgers out of mischief. But soon they were quarreling 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!"

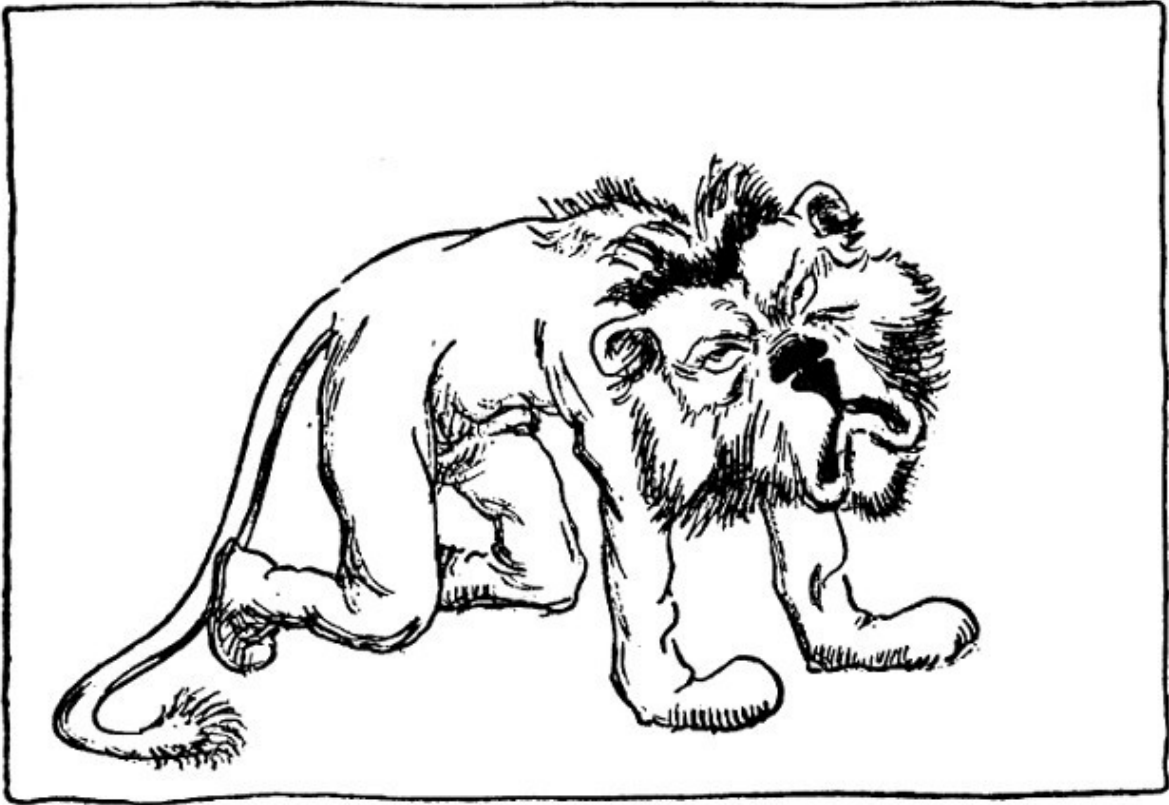
"That's odd of them," drawled Mixtuppa, rolling her blue eyes at Tazzy. "Poor taste I call it!"

"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, snatching 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 Tazywaller, 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 laugh—or 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,  
You're 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 good-bye 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.



THERE WAS A TEARING RIP, AND THE CLOWN DISAPPEARED THROUGH THE TENT  
TOP

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.



