

CLASSICS TO GO
THE SILVER
PRINCESS IN OZ



RUTH PLUMLY THOMPSON

The Silver Princess in Oz

Ruth Plumly Thompson

LIST OF CHAPTERS

- [1](#) The King Rebels
- [2](#) The Elegant Elephant of Oz
- [3](#) Gaper's Gulch
- [4](#) Out of Gaper's Gulch
- [5](#) Headway
- [6](#) The Other Side of the Desert
- [7](#) The Princess of Another Planet
- [8](#) On to Ev
- [9](#) The Box Wood
- [10](#) Night in the Forest
- [11](#) The Field of Feathers
- [12](#) Arrival at the Castle of the Red Jinn
- [13](#) Gludwig the Glubrious
- [14](#) The Slave of the Magic Dinner Bell
- [15](#) Nonagon Island
- [16](#) All Together at Last
- [17](#) In the Red Jinn's Castle
- [18](#) The Red Jinn Restored
- [19](#) Red Magic
- [20](#) King and Queen of Regalia



Dear Boys and Girls:

This book will tell you all that happened when Randy and Kabumpo traveled off to the Castle of the Red Jinn. Halfway there they met a Princess from Another Planet and her Thunder Colt; later, a villain named Gludwig. With a name

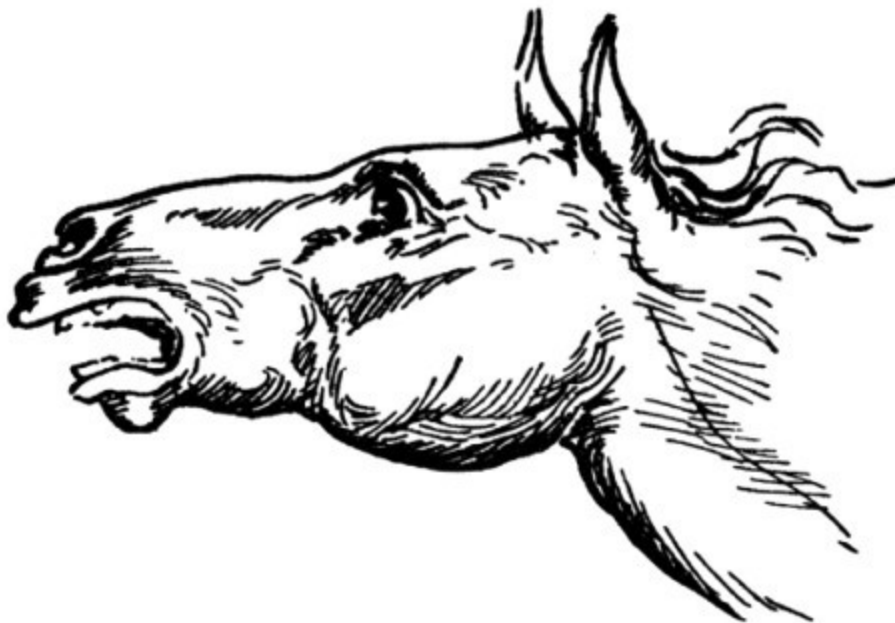
like that, we'd know he was a villain, wouldn't we? Now DO tell me what interested you most in this story; any Oz news you have heard lately and all about yourself!

There goes the bell now! Well, I'm expecting a merry message any minute from any of you! Exciting, isn't it? So here I go to read my first letter!

Yours, with last year's love and this year's wishes!

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CHAPTER 1

The King Rebels

In a far-away northwestern corner of the Gilliken Country of Oz lies the rugged little Kingdom of Regalia, and in an airy and elegant castle, set high on the tallest mountain, lives Randy, its brave young King. When the Regalians are not busy celebrating one of their seventy-seven national holidays, they are busy tending their flocks of goats or looking after the vines that cover every mountain and hill, producing the largest and most luscious grapes in Oz. These proud and independent mountain folk have much to recommend them, and if they consider themselves superior to any and all of the other natives in Oz, we must not blame them too much. Perhaps the sharp, clear air and high altitude in which they live is responsible for their top-lofty attitude. Randy, it must be confessed, found the stiff and unbending manner of his subjects and their correct and formal behavior on all occasions stuffy in the extreme; and of all the stuffy occasions he had to endure the weekly court reception was the stuffiest. Just as I started this story he was winding up another of these royal and boring affairs.

"Hail! Hail! Give Majesty its proper due,
Hail Randywell, King Handywell of Brandenburg and
Bompadoo!
Boom! BOOM! BOOM!"

At each crash of the drums the young King winced and shuddered, then, pulling himself together, he nodded resignedly to his richly attired courtiers and subjects who were retiring backwards from the royal presence. As the last

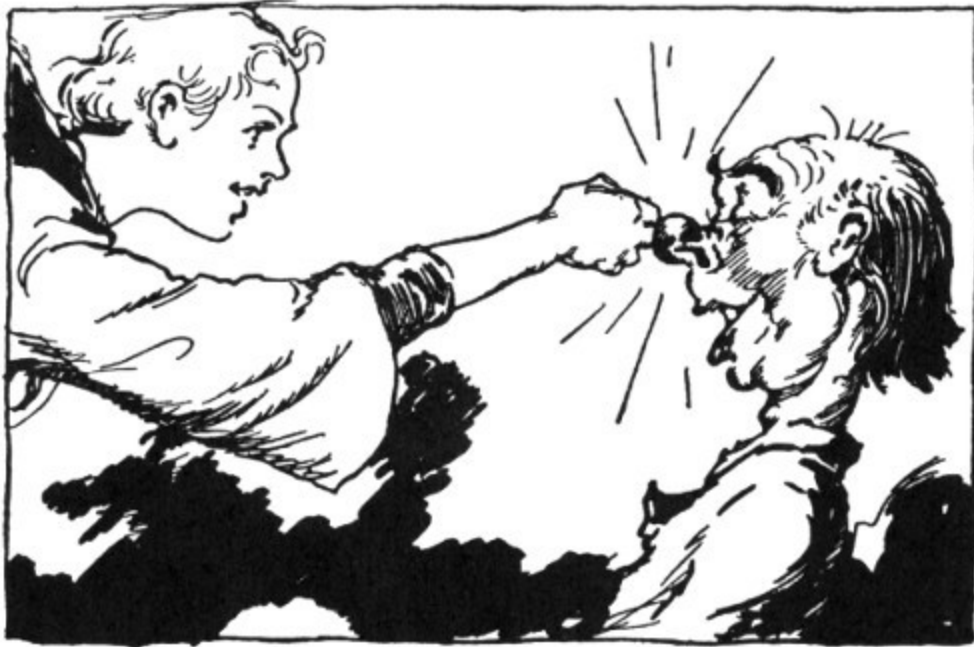
bowing figure swished through the double doors, Randy gave a huge sigh and groan. This was his three hundred and tenth reception since ascending the throne. Ahead stretched hundreds more, besides the daily courts where he acted as presiding Judge to settle all disputes of the realm; countless reviewings of troops; inspections of model goat farms; and attendance at numerous celebrations for national heroes of Regalia.

"Oh, being a King is awful," choked the youthful monarch, loosening his regal cape and letting it fall unheeded to the floor. "AWFUL! Will it always be like this, Uncle?"

"Like what?" His uncle, the Grand Duke Hoochafoo, who was still inclining his head mechanically in the direction of the door, caught himself abruptly in the middle of a bow.

"Oh, all this silly standing round and being bowed at, this 'Hail! Hail! and Way for His Majesty!' stuff. Galloping Gollopers, Uncle, I'd like to step out by myself occasionally without twenty footmen springing to open doors and fifty pages tooting on their blasted trumpets. Why, I cannot even cross the courtyard, that a dozen guardsmen do not fall in behind me!" Flouncing over to the window, Randy stared out over the royal terrace. "Even the goats on the mountain have more fun than I do," he observed bitterly. "They can run, jump, climb and even butt one another, while I—" Randy let his arms fall heavily at his sides. "I have not even anyone to fight with. If just ONCE somebody would punch me in the nose instead of bowing." Randy clenched and unclenched his fists.

"Hm—mm! So that's what you want!" Looking quizzically at his young nephew, Uncle Hoochafoo crossed to the bell rope and gave it a savage tug. As Randy's personal servant and valet appeared to answer the ring, he spoke sharply, "Dawkins, kindly hit His Majesty in the nose!"



"The nose? Oh, but Your Lordship, I couldn't do a thing like that. 'Tisn't right, nor fitting—nor—"

"I said hit him in the nose," commanded Uncle Hoochafoo, advancing grimly upon the terrified valet.

"Yes, yes, like this!" Bringing up his fist, Randy made such a splendid connection with the valet's nose, Dawkins toppled over backwards. Dancing from one foot to the other as the outraged servant sprang to his feet, Randy prepared to defend himself. But with his hand clapped to his nose, Dawkins was retiring rapidly. "Thank you!" he muttered in a strangled voice, "thank you very much!"

"Did you hear that? He said 'Thank you,'" screamed Randy as Dawkins disappeared with an agitated bow. "Oh, this is too much; I wish I were back with Nandywog in Tripedalia—or anywhere but here, doing anything but this."

"Now, now! Don't take things so hard," begged his uncle, patting him kindly on the shoulder.

"Hard?" Randy glared at the old nobleman. "I can take things hard, Uncle, but I cannot take them soft. I'll never forgive my father for getting me into this—NEVER!" Randy's father, former King of Regalia, tiring of a royal life and routine, had retired to a distant cave to live the life of a hermit, and Randy, after traveling all over Oz to fulfil the seven difficult tests required of a Regalian ruler, had succeeded to the throne.

"You should not speak like that of your royal parent," chided Uncle Hoochafoo, tapping his spectacles absently against his teeth, "for you are very much like him, my boy, very much like him. Hmm! Hmm! Harumph!" Uncle Hoochafoo cleared his throat thoughtfully. "What you need is a change, a new interest. Ah, I have it! You must marry, my lad, you must marry! Some pretty little Princess or rich young Queen, and then everything will be punjanoobious!"



"Is being married anything like being a King?" inquired Randy suspiciously.

"Oh, no. No, indeed, quite the reverse." The eyes of the old Duke, who had once been married, grew glazed and pensive. "Once you are married, you will feel less like a King every day," he promised solemnly. "And the arguments alone will keep you occupied for hours." Uncle Hoochafoo raised both shoulders and eyebrows. "Wait, I'll just go consult the wise men about a proper Princess for you."

"No! No! I do not wish to be married," announced Randy, stamping his foot. "I'll not marry for years," he declared stubbornly. Then, as loud outcries and tremendous thumps interrupted them, he hurried over to an open window just in time to meet a large rock that came crashing through the amethyst pane.

"Look out!" blustered Uncle Hoochafoo, jerking Randy to his feet, for the rock had completely bowled him over. "Well, I see you have your wish. How's that for a knock in the nose, my lad? Not only the nose, but also the beginning of a beautiful black eye!"

"Have I really?" Racing over to a mirror, Randy proudly examined his injured orb. "Oh, Uncle, isn't this fun? Who did it? What's up, d'ye s'pose—a revolution?" Hurrying back to the window, Randy recklessly thrust out his head to stare down into the courtyard. Kayub, the Gatekeeper, had his shoulder braced against the gold-studded doors in the castle wall, but even so, the doors were bulging and creaking from the thunderous blows struck from the other side.

"Open in the name of the LAW!" boomed a tremendous voice. "Thump! Thump! Kerbang! OPEN in the name of a Prince of the Realm! Open this door, you unmannerly Scuppernong!"

"No, no, stay where you are!" panted Kayub, waving desperately with one arm for the guards to come help him.

"Stay where you are, or go to the rear entrance! Who do you think you are, hammering on the doors of His Majesty's castle?"



"I don't think, I know!" raged the voice from the other side of the wall. "I am a Prince of Pumperdink, you unspeakable clod. Open up this door before I break it down!" And after even more furious thumps another shower of rocks came flying over the wall.

"Great Gillikens! I think—I believe—why it IS! Kayub, Kayub, open the door! It is a Prince!" shouted Randy, using both hands as a megaphone.

"'Tis nothing of the sort," grunted the Gatekeeper obstinately. "I looked through me little grill but a moment ago and it's no Prince at all, but a parade! A parade of one elephant, if you please, and when I orders him to the rear entrance he ups with his trunk and flings rocks over our wall!"

"But this elephant IS a Prince," insisted Randy, banging on the window ledge. "Besides, he's a great friend of mine."

"Open the door, fool!" directed Uncle Hoochafoo, leaning so far out the window his crown fell to the paving stones. "The King has spoken. Admit this elephant at once! At once!"

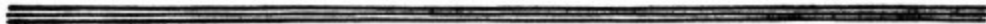
"And about time," fumed an indignant voice, as Kayub reluctantly drew the bolts and, swinging wide the doors, stepped back to let a magnificently caparisoned elephant swing through. "A fine welcome this is, I must say, for the Elegant Elephant of Oz! Out of my way, wart!" Picking Kayub up in his trunk, the visitor jammed him down hard into a golden trash barrel, trumpeted fiercely at the double line of guards who had instantly sprung to attention, and went swaying across the courtyard.

Now nowhere but in Oz could an elephant talk, much less come hammering on the doors of a royal castle, but in Oz, as we very well know, animals talk and act as sensibly as people, which makes Oz about ten times as exciting as any other country on the map. But while I've been explaining all this, Randy had run down the steps and was half-way across the courtyard.



"Kabumpo, KABUMPO, is it really you? Oh, at last—AT LAST you are here!" Impatiently waving aside the guards, Randy led his mammoth and still muttering guest into the palace.

"Kaybumpo, is it?" sniffed Kayub, jerking himself with great difficulty out of the trash barrel. "Such goings on. Well, all I say—" The Gatekeeper peered carefully over his shoulder to see that the elephant was safely inside the castle, then, raising his arm for the benefit of the staring guards, he cried fiercely. "All I can say is—just let him show his snoot around here again and I'll kabump him down the mountain!"



CHAPTER 2

The Elegant Elephant of Oz

Fortunately the doors of Randy's castle were high and wide, and the rooms so large and spacious, even a guest as large as this elephant could quite easily be accommodated. Still irritated by the Gatekeeper's insolence, Kabumpo followed the young ruler to the throne room where he sank stiffly to his haunches and waited in outraged silence for Randy to speak. Randy, however, was so surprised and happy to see his old friend and comrade, he could not utter a word. But the Elegant Elephant could not long withstand the honest delight and affection beaming from the young King's eyes, and under that kindly glow his wrath melted away like fog in the sunshine.

"Well! Well!" he rumbled testily, "how do I look?"

"Elegant!" breathed Randy, stepping back to have a better view. "Elegant as ever. You've worn your best robe and jewels, haven't you?"

"Always wear my best when I call on a King," said Kabumpo, smoothing down his embroidered collar complacently with his trunk.

"And I believe you've grown a foot," went on Randy, standing on tiptoe to pat Kabumpo on the shoulder.

"A foot," roared the Elegant Elephant, throwing back his head. "Oh, come now, I couldn't have grown a foot without noticing it, and I still have but four—here, count 'em! Say, who in hay bales gave you that black eye?"

"YOU did." Randy fairly sputtered with mirth at Kabumpo's discomfited expression. "I was just wishing someone would hit me in the nose, when along came that rock and NOW look at me!"

"Yes," put in Uncle Hoochafoo, regarding Kabumpo severely through his monocle. "Now look at him!"

"Well, why didn't you tell that wart of a doorkeeper I was expected?" demanded Kabumpo explosively.

"The King of Regalia does not hold conversation with his doorkeeper," explained Randy's uncle, giving the Elegant Elephant a very sour look.

"Oh, he doesn't!" Kabumpo lurched grandly to his feet. "Well, it's time somebody told him about the Elegant Elephant of Oz and how he should be received and welcomed. Let me tell you, sirrah—trumpets blow when I come and go in Pumperdink!"



"Then why did you ever leave there?" inquired the Duke coldly.

"Oh, Uncle, don't you remember, we were to review the Purple Guard at five? YOU go," urged Randy, fearful lest the tempery old Duke would still further insult the even more tempery old elephant. "Honestly, I feel a cold coming on." Randy coughed plaintively, at the same time winking at Kabumpo.

"Very well, I'll go," agreed his uncle stiffly. "But do not forget there is a dinner for the Grape Growers at seven, a concert of the Goat Herdsmen at eight, maneuvers of our Highland Guards in the Royal Barracks at nine and—"

"Yes, yes! All right!" Randy fairly pushed his royal relative toward the door.

"An ancient pest if I ever saw one," grumbled Kabumpo as the Grand Duke disappeared with a very grim expression. "Great gooselberries! Do we have to do all those dumb things? Why, it's six years since I've seen you, Randy, and I kinda thought we'd have a cozy time all to ourselves."

"I never have any time to myself," sighed the young monarch wistfully. "I do nothing but lay cornerstones and raise flags and stand around at Royal Courts and Receptions. Everybody bows and bows. Why, it's got so I even bow to myself when I look in the glass, and NOW—" Randy raised his arms indignantly. "Now Uncle Hoochafoo says I must marry."

"Marry!" trumpeted Kabumpo, twinkling his eyes angrily. "What nonsense! Why, you are nowhere near old enough to marry. You were only about ten when I met you and that makes you sixteen now, though I must say you don't look it!"

"Oh, no one in Oz looks his age," grinned Randy, "and you know I'd been ten for about four years before I knew you, Kabumpo, so that makes me twenty or so, doesn't it?"

"I don't care what it makes you," rumbled Kabumpo, "it makes me mad. And to think I actually helped get you into all this boring business. My ears and trunk, Kingling, it's up to me to get you out of it."

"How?" demanded Randy, folding his arms and leaning despondently against the mantel. "How does one stop being a King, Kabumpo?"

"Why, by stopping," announced the Elegant Elephant, spreading his ears to their fullest extent. "By taking a vacation, my fine young sprig. By departing and going hence for a suitable season. Do you suppose I came all the way from Pumperdink to hear Goatherds tootling on bells and Highlanders tramping round a barracks? I came to see you, my boy, and nobody else." Kabumpo paused to blow his trunk explosively on a violet silk handkerchief. "And after that I thought we'd go and visit the Red Jinn."

"Oh, Kabumpo, could we?" Randy's face brightened and then as quickly fell. "I don't believe Uncle Hoochafoo will let me go," he finished dolefully.

"A King does not ask whether or not he may go, he GOES," stated the Elegant Elephant, beginning to sway like a ship under full sail. "But to avoid all arguments we'll not start till later. Could you be ready by midnight, young one?"

"Oh, I'm ready now," declared Randy, picking up his cloak from the floor and snatching a sword from its bracket on the wall. "Why ever did you wait so long, Kabumpo? You promised to visit me six months after I was crowned."

"Well, you know how it is at a court." The Elegant Elephant sighed and settled back on his haunches again. "If it isn't one thing it's another, but here I am at last. So—order up your dinner and a few bales of hay and a barrel of cider for me. I crave rest and refreshment."