Ririro
READ ANYWHERE, ANYTIME

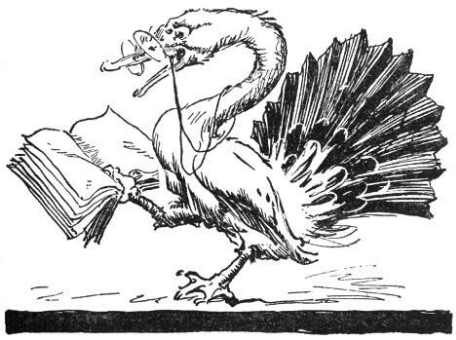
Captain Salt in Oz (Book #30)

Ruth Plumly Thompson

- Chapter 1: Sail Ho!
- Chapter 2: Anchors Aweigh
- Chapter 3: The Fire Baby
- Chapter 4: Samuel's First Specimen
- Chapter 5: Patrippany Island
- Chapter 6: A Little Wild Man
- Chapter 7: Strange Specimens for Samuel Salt
- Chapter 8: Maxims for Monarchs
- Chapter 9: Sea Legs for Tandy
- Chapter 10: The City of Bridges
- Chapter 11: The Prince of the Peaks
- Chapter 12: Fog
- Chapter 13: The Sea Forest
- Chapter 14: The Sea Unicorn!
- Chapter 15: The Collector Is Collected
- Chapter 16: The Storm!
- Chapter 17: The Old Man of the Jungle!
- Chapter 18: A New Country
- Chapter 19: Boglodore's Revenge
- Chapter 20: King Tandy
- Chapter 21: A Voyage Resumed

Chapter 1: Sail Ho!

Eight miles east of Pingaree lies the eight-sided island of King Ato the Eighth. While not so large as Pingaree, the Octagon Isle is nevertheless one of the tidiest and most pleasing of the sea realms that dot the great green rolling expanses of the Nonestic Ocean. And Ato himself is as pleasing as his island, enormously fat and jolly with a kind word for everyone.



In his eight-sided castle, he has every modern convenience and comfort and some of which even an up-to-date country like our own cannot boast. For instance, take Roger, his Royal Read Bird. Roger, besides knowing eight languages, can read aloud for hours at a time without growing hoarse or weary. So Ato never has to strain his eyes poring over his eight hundred huge volumes of adventure and history, nor his arms holding a newspaper or court document, nor his jaw pronouncing the names of kings and countries in Ev and Oz and other curious places on the mainland west of his own island. And Roger is as handsome as he is handy, his head and bill rather like a duck's, his body shaped and colored like a parrot, but much larger, while his tail opens out into an enormous fan. This is extremely fortunate, for the Octagon Isle is semi-tropical in climate, and on warm sultry days, Roger not only reads to his Majesty, but fans him as well. All in all, Ato's life is decidedly luxurious and lazy.

Sixentwo, Chief Chancellor of the realm, and Four'nfour, its treasurer, attend to all the business of governing, so that Ato and Roger have little to do but enjoy themselves. The Octagon Islanders, one hundred and eighty in number, are a sober and industrious lot, rarely giving any trouble.

Once, it is true, they sailed off and deserted the King entirely, but Ato, with Peter, a Philadelphia boy, and Samuel Salt, a pirate, who landed on the Island at just the right moment, immediately set out after them, using the pirate's stout ship the Crescent Moon, for the purpose.

By a strange coincidence, Samuel Salt's men had also mutinied and sailed away, so that there were two sets of deserters to seek out and discover. After a dangerous and lively voyage, the Crescent Moon reached the rocky shores of Menankypoo on the Mainland. Here they learned that the Octagon Islanders and Samuel Salt's men had been enslaved by Ruggedo, the former Gnome King, and marched off to conquer the Emerald City of Oz. How Peter and the Pirate, Ato and a poetical Pig outwitted the Gnome King is a long and other story. You have probably read it yourself. But ever since their hair-raising experiences with Ruggedo, and their rescue by Ato, the Octagon Islanders have been perfectly satisfied with their own ruler and country. In fact, they were so docile and devoted, so fearfully anxious to please, Ato often wished they would revolt or

sass him a little just to relieve the monotony and make life more interesting.



To tell the truth, after serving as cook, mate and able-bodied seaman on the Crescent Moon, Ato found it quite boring to settle down to a humdrum life of a monarch ashore. Roger, too, missed the gay and carefree life he had led as a pirate and could not even pretend an interest in the books of adventure he still dutifully read to his Master. He and Ato now spent most of their time on the edge of the Island—the King in a comfortable hammock swung between two palm trees, Roger on a tall golden perch set close beside him. Whenever the Read Bird paused to yawn or turn a page, Ato would pull himself up to a sitting position, raise the telescope he always had with him and gaze long and wistfully out to sea. Many ships passed Ato's Island, but never a one in the least resembling the splendid three-masted fast sailing ship belonging to the Pirate.

"You'll give yourself a fine squint there," warned Roger one morning, as Ato for about the hundredth time raised his spy glass. "And what is the use of it, pray?" inquired Roger grumpily, ruffling the pages of the Book of Barons. "Samuel Salt has probably forgotten all about us and gone off by himself on a voyage of discovery."

"No! No! Sammy wouldn't do that," said the King, shaking his head positively. "He promised to stop by for us on the very first voyage he made as Royal Discoverer of Oz."

"Ho, one of those seafaring promises!" muttered Roger. "A pirate's promise. Humph! His new honors have gone to his head. Quite a jump from pirating to exploring. I'll wager a wing he's gone back to buccaneering and forgotten us altogether!"



"Now, Roger, how can you say that?" Heaving up his huge bulk with great difficulty, Ato looked reproachfully at his Royal Read Bird. "Sammy never cared for pirating in the first place," wheezed the King earnestly, "and he was so soft-hearted about planking the captives and burning the ships, his band sailed off

and left him. They only made him Captain because he was clever at navigating, and you know perfectly well he spent more time looking for flora and fauna than for ships and treasure."

"Ah, then I suppose some wild Flora or Fauna has him in its clutches," observed Roger sarcastically, "and a likely thing that is, seeing the poor Captain weighs but two hundred and twenty pounds and stands six feet in his socks."

"What a tremendous fellow he was," sighed Ato, sinking dreamily back in his hammock and half closing his eyes. "I'll never forget how high and handsome he looked when Queen Ozma asked him to give up buccaneering, and serve her instead as Royal Discoverer and Explorer for Oz! And a fitting reward it was, too, for capturing Ruggedo and saving the Kingdom. Aha, my lad, THAT was a day! And we had our share of glory, too! Remember how they cheered us in the Emerald City of Oz?"

"Aye, I remember THAT day and a good many other days since," sniffed the Read Bird disagreeably. "Six months from that day Samuel Salt was to sail into our Harbor. Well, King—it's been six times six months, and nary a sail nor a sign of him have we seen."

"That long?" said Ato, blinking unhappily.

"That long and longer. Three years, eleven months, twenty-six days and twelve hours, to be exact!"

"Dear, dear and dear! Then something's happened to him," murmured Ato. "He's either been shipwrecked, captured or enchanted! I'll never believe Sammy would forget us or break his promise. Never!"

"Well, whatever you believe, the results are the same." Flapping open his book, Roger prepared to go on with his reading. "And depend upon it," he insisted stubbornly, "we'll never see Samuel Salt again, so you may as well put up your telescope and put your mind on something else for a change. Maybe it's your cooking that's keeping him away," finished the Read Bird, who felt cross and fractious and contrary as a goat.

"My cooking?" roared Ato, roused to honest anger at last. "I've a notion to have you plucked and roasted for that. My cooking, indeed! Show me the fellow who can beat up an omelette, a cake, a batch of biscuits, faster than I; who can brown a fowl, broil a steak or toss out a pan of fried potatoes to compare with mine. I—I, why, I'm surprised at you, Roger!"

Roger, ruffling his feathers uncomfortably, was rather surprised at himself, for the King was speaking the exact truth; a more skillful man with a skillet it would be impossible to find in any kingdom. Ever since his voyage on the Crescent Moon, cooking had been Ato's chief pleasure and pastime. The castle chef, though he heartily disapproved of a King in the kitchen, could do nothing to discourage him, so finally stood by in grudging envy and admiration as Ato turned out his delectable puddings, pies, roasts and sauces.



Muttering with hurt pride and indignation, his Majesty continued to frown at the Read Bird, and realizing he had gone too far, Roger started to read as fast as he could from the Book of Barons. As he read on, he could see the King growing calmer and finally, pausing to turn a page, he let his gaze rove idly over the harbor.

"Anchors and animal crackers! What was that?" Stretching up his neck, Roger took another look, then, flinging the Book of Barons high into the air, he spread his wings and started out to sea.

Soothed by the droning voice of the Read Bird, Ato had closed his eyes and the first warning he had of Roger's departure was a terrific thump as the Book of Barons landed on his stomach. Leaping out of the hammock as if he had been shot, the outraged Monarch looked furiously around for his Read Bird. This really was too much. Not satisfied with insulting him, Roger must now be bombarding him with books, cocoanuts and what not.

Shading his eyes with his hand, Ato glared up and down the beach and finally out over the rippling blue ocean. At what he saw there, the King forgot his anger as completely as Roger had forgotten his manners. For, swinging jauntily into the Octagon Harbor was the Crescent Moon herself! No mistaking the high-prowed, deep-waisted, powerful craft of the Pirate. But a new and gayer pennant fluttered from the mizzenmast today. Instead of the skull and bones, Samuel was flying the green and white banner of Oz, as befitted the Royal Discoverer and Explorer of the most famous Fairyland in History.



"He's here! He's come!" shouted Ato, running wildly up and down. "Samuel! SAM-U-EL!" In his delight and excitement the King forgot the Royal dock and began wading out into the bay. Peering around his wheel, Sammy saw him coming and broke into a loud cheerful greeting.

"Hi, King! Ho, King! How are you, you son of a Lubber! Wait till I ease her in and I'll be ashore quicker than quick." Roger had already reached the Crescent Moon and, perched on the Captain's shoulder, was chattering away at such a rate Samuel could hardly keep his mind on his steering. But he was an old hand at such matters, and before Ato had half recovered from the shock of seeing him, the shining three-masted vessel was made fast, and its Master striding exuberantly up the wet planks of the royal dock.

"Ahoy! Ahoy!" he boomed boisterously. "What a day for a voyage! Is it really my old cook and shipmate?"

"None other!" puffed Ato, seizing both of the former pirate's hands. "But what have you done to yourself, Sam-u-el? Where's your sash and scimiter? And what's that on your head, may I ask? You don't look natural or seaman-like at all."



"Oh, don't mind these," grinned the Pirate, touching his three-cornered hat and satin coat apologetically. "These are my shore togs for impressing the natives. Can't look like pirates when we go ashore this voyage, Mates. We're explorers and fine gentlemen now, and when we set the flag of Oz on lofty mountains and rocky isles, when we bring savage tribes and strange races under the beneficent rule of Ozma of Oz, we must look like Conquerors. Eh, my lads?"

"Yes—I sup-pose—so!" puffed the King, skipping clumsily to keep up with the long strides of Captain Salt. "But I'm sorry this is going to be a dressy affair, Sammy. How'm I to cook in a cocked hat and lace collar and swab down the deck in velvet pants?"

"Ho, ho! You'll not have to," exploded the Pirate, giving the tail feathers of the Read Bird a sly tweak. "On shipboard we'll dress as we please, for the sea is MY country and free as the wind and sun."

"Well, well, I'm glad to hear you say that. Have you still got my old pirate suit and blunderbuss aboard?" inquired the King anxiously.

"Certain for sure, and a couple of new ones, and WAIT till you see your galley all fitted out with copper pots, and provisions enough below to carry us anywhere

and back. Wait till you cast your eyes on 'em, Lubber!"

"Don't you call ME a Lubber!" chuckled Ato, giving Samuel a hearty poke in the ribs. "I'm as able-bodied a seaman as you, Sammy, and you know it."

"SIR Samuel, if you please!" roared the former Pirate, striking himself a great blow on the chest with his clenched fist. "Sir Samuel Salt, Explorer and Discoverer Extraordinary to the Crown of Oz."

"So—oooh! You've been knighted?" breathed Roger, peering round into the Captain's face,

"Ho pass the salt and ring the bell
And bend the knee to Sir Sam-u-el!"

"Sir Samuel Salt! Well, I'll be peppered!" gasped Ato, sinking down on the lower step of the palace which they had reached by this time. "Sir Samuel!"



"Yes, SIR!" boasted the Pirate, rubbing his hands together, "but come on, step lively, boys; how long'll it take you to pack up and heave your dunnage aboard? Mustn't keep a Knight of Oz waiting, you know!"

"Keep you waiting?" Suddenly and determinedly, Ato rose to his feet and shook his finger under Sammy's nose. "Keep YOU waiting? Why, we've been ready and waiting for this voyage three years, eleven months, twenty-six days and twelve hours. Where've you been, you great lazy son of a sea-robber?"

"Four years?" choked the Pirate, falling back in real consternation and dismay. "Never! It's never been four years, Mates. Why, I've scarcely had time to sort out the shells and specimens we picked up on the last voyage, and to fit out the Crescent Moon for the next."

"Where have you been?" repeated Ato, wagging his finger sternly.

"Why, home on Elbow Island, of course. Where else should I have been?" muttered Samuel, looking distinctly worried and crestfallen.

"Then have you no clocks or calendars in your cave?" demanded the King accusingly. "And what would the Crescent Moon be needing? I thought she was about perfect as she was."

"Ah, but wait till you see her now!" exclaimed Samuel, cheering up immediately at mention of his ship. "The Crescent Moon, besides a new coat of paint, has self-

hoisting sails and a mechanical steering control in case we wish to take it easy occasionally. The Red Jinn paid me a visit and presented us with these and several other magical contrivances and improvements. I'm minded to make this voyage with no crew but ourselves. It's cozier so, don't you think?"

"Yes, but am I still on bird watch and lookout duty?" demanded Roger jealously.

"Aye, aye!" Samuel Salt assured him heartily.

"I suppose the Red Jinn has supplied you with a mechanical cook in my place as well as a mechanical steering wheel," murmured Ato, tugging uneasily at the cord round his waist.

"In your place!" thundered the Pirate. "Why, shiver my timbers, Mate! Only over my prone and prostrate body shall another man enter my galley to shuffle my rations, sugar my duff or salt my prog!"

"Hooray, then let's get going!" squealed Roger, bouncing up and down on Sammy's shoulder. "I was only saying this very morning that you'd never forget your old friends and shipmates or go on a voyage without us!"

"Huh! So THAT'S what you were saying!" grunted Ato, looking fixedly at the Read Bird. "Well, well, let it go. Come along then!"

"Yes, yes, and hurry," screamed Roger, spreading his wings to fly on ahead.

"Sixentwo! Sevenanone! Where are you?" panted the King, plunging up the steps after Roger two at a time. "Where is everybody? Pack a bag, a chest, a couple of trunks. I'm going on a voyage of discovery!"

"And don't forget the cook book!" bawled Samuel Salt, bounding exuberantly after the King.

Chapter 2: Anchors Aweigh

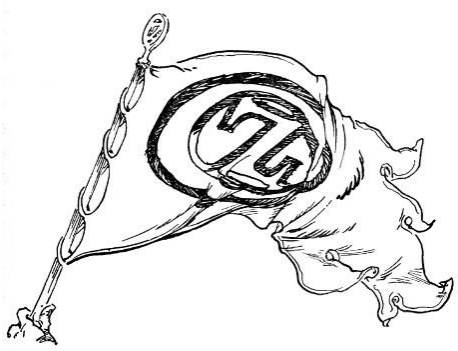


With the help of eighteen serving men, eight courtiers, Sixentwo, Sevenanone, and Samuel Salt, who was not above carrying a sea chest or hamper, Ato began stowing his belongings on the Crescent Moon. There was little court apparel or finery in the King's boxes. Most of it consisted of bottles of flavoring extract, spiced sauces, cook books, minced meats, fruits in jars for pies, numerous frying pans, egg beaters, and rolling pins.

"Are we gypsies, pan handlers, peddlers or what?" panted Samuel Salt as he dumped the last load breathlessly on the main deck. "Goosewing my topsails, Mate, many's the fish we cleaned with a jackknife, and potato we pared with a dagger on the last voyage. Mean to say an explorer needs to use all these weapons on his pork and beans?"

Checking off a list as his stuff was placed in the galley, Ato nodded determinedly, then winking good-humoredly at the perspiring Captain, ducked into the cabin to don his old sea clothes. Samuel was not long following suit and soon, in short red pants, open shirts and carelessly tied head kerchiefs, the two went below to inspect the stores Samuel had laid in for the voyage. Roger, having nothing to bring aboard but a few books and a bottle of feather oil, was already perched in the crosstrees of the fore topgallant mast looking longingly toward the east and waiting impatiently for the ship to get under way. But the booming voice of the Pirate soon drew him to the lower deck and from there he swooped down an open hatchway to the hold.

This huge space, usually reserved by the pirates for captives and treasure, had been neatly divided into two sections. In one were the tinned, dried and salted meats, the groceries, vegetables and extra supplies of rope, tar and sail. In the other section there were numerous shelves, many iron cages, aquariums and sea chests.



"For any strange animals or wild natives we may encounter and wish to bring home with us," explained Samuel Salt as Roger looked curiously at the cages. "In those chests are the flags of Oz we shall plant here, there and everywhere as we sail onward!"

"And to think a new and mighty Empire may grow from this flag planting," mused Ato, opening one of the sea chests and thoughtfully fingering one of Ozma's green and white silken banners. "But surely you don't expect to plant all these, Samuel?"

"Why not?" demanded the Royal Discoverer of Oz with a wave of the scimiter he had resumed with his old pirate pants. "The sea is broad and wide and no one's to tell us when we may start or sail home again. But look, Ato, my lad—these will interest you." Turning from the chests, Samuel pointed to a stack of long poles lashed to the side of the ship with leather thongs. "Stilts!" grinned the Pirate as Roger and Ato stared at them in complete mystification. "Fine for keeping the shins dry when we wade ashore and don't feel like lowering the jolly boat. All my own idea." Samuel cleared his throat with pardonable pride. "Of course, it takes

a bit of practice, but we'll try 'em on the first island we come to. Eh, boys?"

"Well, thank my lucky stars for wings!" breathed Roger after a long disapproving look at Samuel's stilts. "Two steps and you'll smash yourself to a jellyfish, Ato. Stick to the boats, men. That's MY advice!"

"Too bad he has no confidence in us!" roared Samuel, giving Ato a resounding slap on the back. "Just wait, my saucy bird, and we'll show you how stilting is done. And now, gaze upon this corner I've set aside for my specimens; for rare marine growths, for seaweed, for curious mollusks and other crustacean denizens of the darkest deep."

Samuel coughed apologetically as he always did when he mentioned his collecting mania, and Roger and Ato, exchanging an amused grin, swung about to examine the long shelves with iron boxes clamped down to prevent them from shifting with the motion of the vessel, huge aquariums fitted into brass holders, and large trays bedded with dried moss and sand for Samuel's collection of shells.

"You might even bring home a mermaid in this," murmured Ato, touching the side of an enormous aquarium.

"No women!" snapped Samuel Salt, growing red in the face, for he did not like to be teased about his specimen collecting. "I'll—I'll have no women or mermaids switching their tails around my ship and turning things topsy turvy."

"Right," agreed Ato, giving his belt a vigorous tug. "Then how about shoving off, Sammy? Everything's shipshape, there's a good wind and the best way to begin a voyage is to start."



"I'm for it!" roared the Captain, swinging hand over hand up the wooden ladder. "All hands on deck! Up with your Master's flag, Roger. Cast off the mooring lines, Ato, while I make sail and we'll be out of here in a pig's jiffy."

"Aye! Aye!" croaked Roger, seizing the cord that would send Ato's octagon banner flying to the masthead, directly under the flag of Oz. "Goodbye, all you lubbers ashore! Goodbye Sevenanone. Mind you keep the King's Crown polished and don't forget to feed the silver fish."

"GOODBYE!" called the one hundred and eighty Octagon Islanders drawn up on the beach and dock to see his Majesty sail away. "A fine voyage to your Highness!"

"And neglect not to return!" shouted Sixentwo, using his hands as a megaphone. "You know there is a Crown Council eight days and eight months from yesterday."

"Crown Council be jigged!" sniffed Ato, leaning far over the rail to wave to his cheering subjects. "I'm a cook, an explorer—and a bold bad seafaring man out to collect islands and jungles and jillycome-wiggles for Samuel's shell box. Crown Council, indeed! Don't care if I never see a castle again."

"Me neither!" squalled Roger, flying up to his post in the foremast. "Seven bells and all's well! Buoy off the beam and no land in sight."

"Unless you look behind you," laughed Samuel, grabbing the wheel with a practiced hand and squinting cheerfully up at the sun. "East by southeast it'll be this voyage, Mates. There's ice in the North Nonestic and I've a craving for tropical isles and the hidden rivers of some deep and mysterious jungle!"

"Remember Snow Island?" smiled Ato, coming over to stand beside the wheel.



"Shiver my shins! DO I? No more of that, me lads! But Ho! Isn't this like old times?" Stretching up his arms exultingly, Samuel Salt let his hands fall heavily on the wheel, and the great ship lifting with the wind plunged her nose eagerly into the southeast swell.

"M—mmm! Like old times, except for the boy," agreed Ato slowly.

"Aye, and we'll surely miss Peter on this trip," sighed the Captain, shaking his head regretfully. "Wonder where the little lubber is now? That's the trouble with these real countries and peoples, there's no getting at them when you need them most. Well, maybe we'll pick up another hand somewhere to serve as cabin boy and keep us lively on the voyage. But take a look at my sail controls, Ato. We can hoist, trim and furl by just touching different buttons, nowadays; set this wheel for any course and just let her ride."

"Splendid!" grunted Ato, rising reluctantly from a coil of rope. "But since there are no buttons on my stove, I'd best be thinking about dinner."

"Tar and tarpaulin, why didn't I have the Red Jinn fix you some?" exclaimed the Pirate regretfully. "I'm sorry as a goat, Mate."

"Ho—I'm not," laughed Ato, waddling happily off toward his galley. "That would have spoiled everything. What'll it be, Captain—a fried sole, a broiled steak, or a roaring huge hot peppery meat pasty?"

"All of 'em!" yelled the Royal Explorer of Oz, exhaling his breath in a mighty blast of anticipation. It seemed to Roger, high in the foremast, that the ship gave an extra little skip at its Captain's mighty roar, then settling easily into her usual graceful pace she ran smoothly before the wind.

Chapter 3: The Fire Baby



Morning found the Crescent Moon forging ahead with a stiff breeze, a choppy sea and the last known island far behind her.

"Ahoy, and this is the life, Mates!" bellowed Samuel Salt, bracing his legs against the pitch and roll of the vessel, and waving largely to the ship's cook who sat on an overturned bucket mending his second best sea shirt. "Anything can happen now!" Lovingly Samuel let his gaze rove over the sparkling Nonestic, and Ato, squinting painfully as he pushed his long needle in and out, nodded portentously.

"By the way, Sammy, what are your plans for this flag planting and discovery business?" inquired the portly cook somewhat later. Having finished his mending, he had dragged a canvas chair and a pot of potatoes aft by the wheel. "Do you look for resistance and rebellion when we start taking possession of this land and that land for the crown of Oz?"

"No, no, nothing like that," mused Samuel, removing his pipe and blowing a cloud of smoke into the rigging. "Everything's to be polite and peaceable this voyage. No guns, knives or scimiters. Queen Ozma particularly does not want any country taken by force or against its will."

"And suppose they object to being taken at all?" said Ato, beginning to pare a fat potato. "What then?"

"Well, then—er then—" Samuel rubbed his chin reflectively, "we'll try persuasion, my lad. We'll explain all the advantages of coming under the flag and protection of a powerful country like Oz. That ought to get them, don't you think?"

"Yes, if they don't get us first," observed Ato, popping a potato dubiously into the pot. "Suppose while we stand there waving flags and persuading, some of these wild fellows have at us with spears, clubs and poison arrows?"

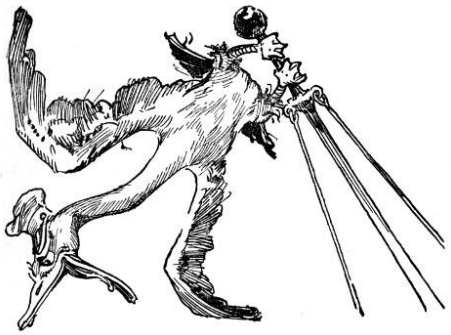
"Well, that would be extremely unfortunate," admitted Samuel, glancing soberly

at the compass, "and in that case——"

"I hope you will remember you were once a pirate and act accordingly," Ato blew out his cheeks sternly as he spoke. "The one trouble with you, Sammy, is that you take too long to get mad. So I shall go ashore armed as usual with my kitchen knife and blunderbuss. I don't intend to be sliced into sandwiches while you're talking through your three-cornered hat, and waving flags at a lot of ignorant savages. And I'll have Roger carry the books ashore too."

"Ho, ho!" roared the Captain of the Crescent Moon, giving his knee a great slap. "Just like old times, Ato. Rough, bluff and relentless, Mates, remember?"

"Aye, and I should say I do. And I remember Roger had to drop a good many books on your head before you got mad enough to fight. What makes you so calm and peaceable, Sammy? A big born fighting man like yourself."



"Sea life, I reckon," answered the former Pirate, extending his brawny arms in a huge yawn. "The sea's so much bigger than a man, Mate—it rather makes him realize how small and unimportant he really is. But don't fret, Cook dear, no one shall tread on your toes, this voyage. But avast there—it grows warmer and the air smells a bit thunderish. Had you noticed?"

"'Hoy, 'hoy! Deck ahoy!" bawled a shrill voice from above. "Island astern." Both Samuel and Ato stared up in amazement, for Roger was supposed to be resting in the cabin. But the Read Bird, after snatching an hour's nap, had slipped out an open port and, unnoticed, taken his position in the foremast. The Read Bird did not trust Ato, who was supposed to be on watch. Besides, he wanted to be the first to report a new island to the Captain.

"Looks like a mountain," mumbled Ato, setting down his potatoes and waddling over to the rail. "Heave to, Skipper, here's our first discovery."

"Now how in sixes did that get by me?" muttered Samuel Salt, hurrying to shorten sail for the zigzag course, back and in, he would have to take to reach the island at all.

It showed plainly enough now, a rugged gray and purple mass of rock, with apparently no vegetation or dwellings of any kind. As the Crescent Moon drew nearer, the sea became smooth and oily, and the air sulphurous and hot.

"Think likely this is an island we might well pass by," murmured Ato, peering critically through his telescope. "Positively deserted so far as I can see—but

there might be valuable minerals in those rocks."

"Don't doubt it!" Samuel Salt curved himself all the way round the wheel in his interest. Mechanical devices were well enough for the open sea, but Samuel preferred to handle his own ship on occasions like this. As there was no harbor or safe place to put in, he decided to anchor off shore and land in the jolly boat. The anchor had just gone clanking and rattling over the side when a horrid hiss and boom from the center of the island made all hands look up in alarm.

"K-kkk cannons!" quavered Ato, dropping his bread knife with a clatter. "Stand by to man the guns!"

But Samuel Salt, instead of heeding the cook's warning, began to sniff the air. "Volcano, Mates," announced the Captain calmly. "And in that case we may be a bit close for comfort. Still, I've always wanted to observe a volcano in action. I've a theory there may be living creatures in the center."

"Living creatures in the center!" raged Ato, tearing off his white apron and dashing it on the deck. "How long will we be living if that fire pot starts boiling? We mayn't be killed, being of magic birth, but we can be jolly well singed, fried, boiled and melted. And after that who'd care to be alive? Quick, Roger, heave in on that chain! Anchors aweigh!"



While Samuel stood in rapt contemplation of the volcano, and Ato began frantically winding up the anchor, a long tongue of flame leaped out of the crater and a great jet of bubbling lava shot clear over the Crescent Moon. This occurrence soon brought Samuel out of his revery, and snapping into action and forgetting all about his mechanical devices, he began working like a mad man to get the ship in motion, tugging at the sheets, throwing his whole weight against the halyards, till the ship with quivering sail sped away like a frightened bird, the hot winds from the volcano whistling and rattling through her rigging.

"Where's Roger?" yelled Ato, staggering across the deck with two buckets of water. "Oh, woe! Is he a Read Bird or a just plain Goose? Look yonder, Sammy, he's flown ashore." Outlined against the sky in a sudden flare from the volcano they could see Roger poised over the center of the smoking island. In his claw was a large rippling banner of Oz and as they looked he lifted the banner high above his head and flung it straight into the center of the boiling crater.

"We hereby take complete and absolute possession of this island and declare all its inhabitants lawful subjects of her Majesty, Queen Ozma of Oz!" screamed Roger hysterically.

"Well, hurray, and three cheers for a real Explorer!" shouted Samuel Salt. "He's done it all by himself, the only man among us who remembered his duty under fire. There's a bird for you, Mates. Not even a volcano can turn him from his duty. All we thought of was safety. Poh!" Rubbing the back of his hand across his eyes, which were full of smoke, Samuel looked glumly across at his cook.



"Now, now, don't be too hard on yourself," puffed the King, setting down the fire buckets. "A Captain must think of his ship, even if he is an Explorer. Besides, having wings gives Roger an advantage of us. Still and all, it was a brave and timely act." Ato's further remarks were drowned out in a second tremendous explosion. Sky and sea turned red, whole flaming boulders shot above the ship's spars, while great sullen waves of lava boiled over the crater's edge and rolled smoking and hissing into the sea.

"Missed us again," panted Samuel Salt, hanging desperately to his wheel as the Crescent Moon plunged and pitched in the angry seas. "Wonder what started that?"

"The Oz flag, probably," gasped Ato, feeling around in the dense smoke for his fire buckets. "Hope Roger got off safely. Where is that fool bird? Ho, Sammy! Hi, Sammy! Quick, they've hit us amidships."

Hastily setting his mechanical steering gear, the former Pirate rushed forward to where a glowing lump of lava was burning its way slowly but surely through the deck.

"Fire! Fire!" shrilled Roger, who had dropped down on the rail unnoticed in the smoke and confusion. "Water, Ato! Water, you old Slow Poke!"

"Avast!" puffed Samuel Salt, staring down in astonishment at the glowing lump at his feet. "It's alive, Mates, and lively as a grig. It's a FIRE baby, that's what! HAH! Didn't I just say there was life on a volcano? Well, this proves it and I'm taking this young one along for proof."

"Now stop talking like a book and act like a seaman," choked Ato, in his agitation tripping over a rope but still managing to keep his hold on the water buckets. "Fire baby or not, can't you see it's burning a hole in the deck, you seventh son of a sea-going Jackass? Here, put it out! Dash this water over it before it burns up the whole ship!"

"Avast! Avast and belay!" roared Samuel Salt in a terrible voice as Ato raised his bucket. "I'm still Captain here. Do you wish to destroy a rare specimen of

volcanic life? Fetch a shovel from the hold, Roger. A shovel, I said, and don't stand there dithering."

"Aye aye, sir!" sputtered the Read Bird, half falling and half flying down the companionway. Now a bird is a quick and handy fellow about a ship and in half the time it would have taken a seaman, Roger was back with a long handled shovel. Snatching the shovel, which he had often used on former treasure hunts, Samuel scooped up the bawling fire baby and started on a run for the galley.

"It's turning black, it's turning black," wailed the disconsolate collector, crooning to the ugly infant as he ran along as if he were its own mother. "Aye, aye—it's going out!"

"And a good thing, too," panted Ato, who was close behind him. "What in tarry barrels are you fixing to do with it, Sammy?"

Roger, sensible bird that he was, stayed long enough to douse the two buckets of water on the smoking deck, then he, too, made a bee line for the galley. He was just in time to see Samuel lift the lid of the range and slide the baby down on top of the hot coals. No sooner had the squat infant touched the glowing fire than it stopped yelling at once and began to purr and sing like a teakettle set on to boil.

"Well, I'll be swizzled!" gulped Ato, and snatching a wet dish towel from the rack, he wound it round and round his aching head. "Whatever made you think of that?"



"It's my scientific mind," the Pirate told them blandly. "The proper place for any infant that size is bed and I naturally figured that a fire baby belonged in a fire bed, and a bed of hot coals was the nearest to it, so here it is!" Winking solemnly at Roger, who was regarding the little Lavaland Islander with fear and loathing, Samuel picked up the poker and gave the baby an affectionate poke. "It'll do fine here," he predicted happily, "and prove beyond a quibble that volcanos are inhabited."

"It'll do nothing of the sort!" exploded Ato, bringing his fat fist down with a resounding thump on the drain board. "You may be the Captain of the ship, Sammy, but I'm the boss of this galley, and that fire baby will have to go. GO! Do you understand? How'm I to cook with the ugly little monster lolling all over the fire bed and like as not falling into the soup when my back is turned?"

"Hark!" interrupted Roger. "More trouble! Something's up, Master Salt, and it's

not an eruption either." And Samuel had to agree with him as groans, moans, shrieks and hisses came whistling after the flying ship.

"Ah, that'll be the rest of them!" exulted the Royal Discoverer, pounding out on deck. "Hah! It's the Lavaland Islanders themselves. Ho—this WILL be interesting!"

"Well, just invite them over and we'll all burn up happily together," suggested Ato bitterly.

Hanging over the taffrail, Samuel paid no attention to the King's sarcastic suggestion. Indeed, he was much too interested, for just showing above the flaming circle of the volcano's crater was a row of immense and thunderous looking natives. They were of transparent rock-like structure and burned and glowed from the molten lava that coursed through their veins. With upraised arms and furious faces they were yelling over and over some strange and indistinguishable threats and phrases. One, shaking the blackened stick of the Oz flag, danced and screamed louder than all the rest put together.



"They do not wish to become subjects of Oz, I take it," sighed Samuel, undecided whether to sail back and argue the matter, or sail away and save his ship from possible destruction.

"That's not it! That's not it!" cried Roger, flapping his wings triumphantly. "I know what's the matter. They want that baby back. You're probably making off with the Crown Prince of the Volcano. See that woman yelling louder than the others and holding out both arms? Well, look—she has a crown on her head and is likely the Queen. She wants her baby back."

"And she should have it, too," stated Ato, blinking his eyes at the frightful racket the Lavaland Islanders were making. "You can't steal people's children like this, Sammy, unless you're going back to buccaneering. It's just plain piracy."

"She threw it at us, didn't she?" muttered the Captain, who was unwilling to part with so valuable a specimen.

"It probably blew out of its cradle when the volcano erupted. Give it back to her, Sammy," begged Ato, who was determined to get rid of the terrible infant at any cost. "After all, she's its mother."

"But do you expect me to sail back there and endanger all of our lives?" Samuel jerked his head angrily. "And how else can it be done?"

"Er—er—let Roger carry it back in that old wire basket we use for clams," proposed the cook eagerly.

"Not on your life," protested Roger in a sulky voice. "The basket would grow red hot and burn my bill. Besides, I'm no stork. Tell you what we could do, though, and we'd better be quick before they start throwing things."

"What?" inquired the Captain, gazing uneasily at the infuriated Islanders.

"Why, simply shoot it back," Roger said calmly. "Stuff it in the port cannon and blaze away. You never miss your mark, Master Salt, and if you can't shoot that baby back into its mother's arms, I'll walk on my wings and be done with it."

"Why, Roger, how clever! The very thing!" rejoiced Ato. "I'll go fetch it with the fire tongs and you'll have to hurry, Sammy, or we'll be out of range."

"But it might injure the young one," objected the Captain of the Crescent Moon, shifting his feet uncomfortably.

"Nonsense, it'll be just like a ride in a baby carriage for that little rascal. Prime your gun, Sammy, while I get the child."



By this time the clamor from the Island had become so alarming that even Samuel realized something would have to be decided. So, somewhat mollified by Roger's compliment on his aim, he made ready to fire the port cannon. The baby, hissing lustily, was brought without accident from the galley. Ato held it gingerly before him, using the fire tongs, Roger following along to hold a lighted candle under the little fellow to keep him from going out before he was shot.



The baby fitted nicely into the cannon's mouth and stopped crying instantly. At the last moment Samuel almost lost his courage, but urged on to action by both Ato and Roger, he carefully made his calculations and then shutting both eyes pulled the cord that set off the gun. The terrible explosion shocked the Lavalanders into silence, and almost afraid to look, Samuel opened his eyes.

"Yo, ho, ho! Three cheers for the Skipper!" squealed Ato, snatching the towel from his head and waving it like a banner. "The neatest shot you ever made,

Mate, and a lucky shot, too." The baby and the cannon ball which would have shattered a less durable lady had struck the Lava Queen amidships. Dropping the cannon ball carelessly into the crater, the giantess clasped her child in her arms, smiling and screaming her thanks across the tumbling waters.

"Well, was I right, or was I right?" chuckled Roger, teetering backward and forward on the rail and preening his feathers self-consciously. "And I've another idea just as good in case you should be interested."

"Oh, keep it till tomorrow," grumbled Samuel Salt, who felt terribly depressed at the loss of his rare specimen.

"But tomorrow will be too late," persisted Roger, settling on the Captain's shoulder. "Now, while these savages are in a good humor, let me fly over and drop another Oz flag on the Island. Maybe this time they'll let it stand and once it flies over the crater the Island is Ozma's."

"By the tooth of a harpooned whale, you're right! I'm forgetting my duty to Oz," breathed Samuel, straightening up purposefully. "But our kind of flag won't stand the climate yonder."

The Read Bird, however, had thought even of that. Taking a sheet of iron from the hold, the resourceful fellow stopped in the galley long enough to burn in the word OZ with the red hot poker. Then, thrusting the poker itself through two slits in his iron banner, he flew jauntily back to the Island.



"Ahoy, and there's a standard bearer for you!" Rubbing his hands together, Samuel strode to the rail. "Bless my buttons, the boy deserves a medal for this, and shall have one, too."

This time the Lavaland Islanders watched Roger's approach with quiet interest and as he hovered uncertainly over their heads held up their hands for the iron flag. But Roger, made daring by their friendliness, swooped down suddenly to the crater's edge, and jamming his banner between two smoking boulders soared aloft.

"Lavaland Islanders!" screamed the Read Bird hoarsely. "You are now under the protection and rule of Queen Ozma of Oz. Lavaland Islanders, you are hereby adjured to keep the peace and the law and LAV one another!"

His voice cracked from fright and excitement, but finishing triumphantly, he spread his wings and skimmed back to the Crescent Moon.

"Hung wung wah HEEE!" yelled the Islanders all together, nodding their heads and waving their arms cheerfully. "Hung wung wah HEEE!"

Chapter 4: Samuel's First Specimen



"What do you make of that?" puffed Samuel Salt as Roger dropped breathlessly down on his shoulder. "Well, 'Hung wung wah HEEE!' it is. Let's give them a cheer for luck." Lifting his great voice, the Royal Discoverer for Oz, helped out by his two shipmates, sent the weird call booming back across the water.

An answering call came from the Island, and then, with a hiss and thud, a small glowing object fell on the deck. Fortunately the fire tongs were still handy and picking up the offending object before it could do any damage, Ato marched sternly off to the galley. Stopping long enough for another wave to the Island, which was growing smaller and smaller as the Crescent Moon sped away, Samuel hastened after his cook, jotting down hurried notes in his journal as to latitude and longitude as he ran along.

"There's something written on this piece of lava," announced Ato, who had dropped the smoking souvenir from Lavaland on the stove. Peering over his shoulder, Samuel could see queer raised symbols and signs on the sulphurous surface of the rock.

"There's something crawling on it, too," volunteered Roger, who was perched on the towel rack above the stove, and had a better view, "a golden frog or a lizard."

"Merciful mustard! What next?" groaned Ato.



"Why, this—this—" Samuel's voice quivered with excitement and disbelief, "this, Mates, is as fine a specimen of a Preoztoric Monster as a scientist could hope for; a real live salamander, a fire lizard, straight from the burning depths of yonder crater. Stars! Tar and Tarrybarrels! This is even better than the baby and will prove my point just as well."

"Does it have to live on my stove?" asked Ato ominously, as the Salamander slid merrily backward and forward over the red hot plates of the range. "Home on the range!" snickered Roger, winking at the Pirate.

"Just till I can fix up a hot box for it," apologized Samuel, "but don't fret, old Toff, it doesn't bite and if it falls on the floor, all you have to do is scoop it up and put it back before it goes out."

"Not only cook, mate and swab, but now I'm nursemaid to a fire lizard." Ato shuddered, and reaching for his tall cook's cap, jammed it down hard on his shiny bald head.

"You can keep it in an iron pot while you cook," suggested Roger practically, "and after all, King dear, it's the only Salamander in captivity. Here, Sally, here Sal—this way, my little crater critter." Tilting the pot on the back of the stove, Roger was delighted to find the Salamander quite willing to answer to her new name. As she slid adventurously into the small cooking vessel, the Read Bird quickly righted the pot and clapped on the cover. "There," he exclaimed with a satisfied nod at his Master, "how's that?"

"Well, I suppose I'll have to put up with it," sighed Ato resignedly. "But in some ways pirating was easier than discovering, Sammy. At least, we never kept the captives on the stove. And NOW—" Ato waved his arms determinedly. "Clear out, both of you. It's three bells and time to stir up the food. And just take that pesky rock along with you. I've meat to broil!"

"When this cools, maybe I'll be able to figure out the language," exulted Samuel, removing the offending piece of lava with a cake turner. "All in all, a most interesting and profitable day, eh, Roger? An island, a visit from a fire baby, and a real live Preoztoric monster."

"Not bad," agreed the Read Bird, transferring himself to the Captain's shoulder. Depositing the piece of lava on an iron hatchway to cool, Samuel strode happily along the deck, stopping to light the red lamps on the port and the green lights on the starboard. Roger himself had just hung a white light in the rigging when a lusty call from the galley sent him flying off to help Ato serve the dinner.



"What could be cozier than a life at sea?" he reflected, winging jauntily into the main cabin with a dish of roast potatoes. Ato puffed cheerfully behind, bearing a huge tray. On the tray a steaming tureen of soup, a pot of coffee, seven dishes of vegetables and two of smoking meats sent up tantalizing whiffs and fragrances. Later when the Read Bird brought in the pudding, he and Sammy soberly agreed it was the tastiest feast Ato had served on the voyage.

The main cabin of the Crescent Moon, with its red leather couches under the

ports, its easy chairs and tables clamped to the floor to keep them from shifting, with its ship's clock and ship's lanterns, was a cheery place to be when the day's work was ended. There was a huge fireplace for foggy evenings and every visible space on the wall was covered with pictures of pirate ships, ancient sailing vessels and rough maps and charts of strange and curious islands. While Samuel and Ato sat at their ease to finish off the pudding, Roger took his upon the wing, darting in and out between bites to assure himself that all was well on deck. There was a tiny crescent moon sliding down the sky, and the slap of waves against the side of the ship and the wind creaking in the cordage made as pleasant a tune as the heart of a seaman could wish for.

"Now what could be better than this?" said Samuel Salt exhaling a cloud of smoke from his pipe and stretching his legs luxuriously under the long table. "A tidy ship, a good wind and the whole wide sea to sail on."

"Suits me!" grinned Ato scraping up the last of the hard sauce and settling back with a grunt of sheer content. "Did you mark up our volcano on the chart Sammy, and what are we calling it Mates? An island must have a name you know."

"I know." Samuel blew another cloud of smoke upward and cleared his throat. "If it's agreeable to all hands and Roger, I'd like to call it Salamander Island after Sally."

"Why not? There's a Sally in our galley and a real nice gal is Sally," warbled Roger, settling on the back of Samuel's chair and wagging his head in time to the music.

"Sing like a bird, don't ye?" muttered Samuel striding over to the map of Oz and surrounding countries and oceans that covered the west wall.

"I AM a bird," screamed Roger fluttering up to his shoulder. "'Bout here she would lie, Master Salt, sixty leagues from Octagon Island."

As Roger talked on, making numerous suggestions, the Captain of the Crescent Moon drew with red chalk a small but effective picture of Salamander Island showing the volcano in action and the Lavaland Islanders grouped around the crater's top.

"Taken this day without a shot or the loss of a single man," printed Samuel in neat letters under his sketch.

"Don't forget, you shot the baby," twittered Roger raising a claw argumentatively.

"Oh, we can't put in small details like that," sniffed the Captain stepping back to admire his drawing.

"Seems odd for us to be discovering and taking possession of islands for a country we know so little about," mused Ato, looking thoughtfully at the map on the west wall. "Why, we've only been to Oz once ourselves."



"Yes, but everybody knows about Oz," Samuel said putting the red chalk back in the table drawer. "Our business is with wild new countries that have never been seen or heard of. Besides, anyone can see that Oz is overpopulated and needs new territories and sea ports. And since Ozma is so clever at governing, and her subjects all so happy and prosperous, the more people who come under her rule the better!"

"Aye! Aye!" agreed Roger, peering with deep interest at the map. Small wonder the Read Bird was interested, for Oz is one of the most exciting and enchanting countries ever discovered. There are four large Kingdoms in Ozma's realm, the Northern Land of the Gillikens, the Eastern Empire of the Winkies, the Southern Country of the Quadlings and the Western domain of the Munchkins. Each forms a triangle in the oblong of Oz. The Emerald City which is the capital, is in the exact center where all these triangles meet. Each of these Kingdoms has its own ruler, but all four are under the sovereign rule and control of Ozma, the small but powerful fairy who lives in the Emerald City. On all sides, Oz is surrounded by a deadly desert and beyond the desert lie the independent Kingdoms of No-Land, Low Land, Ix, Play, Ev, the Dominions of the Gnome King, and many other strange and important Principalities. These countries form a narrow rim around the desert, and beyond this rim lies the Nonestic Ocean itself, stretching in all directions and to no one knows what far and undiscovered shores. Each of the four Kingdoms in Oz shown on Samuel's map was so dotted with smaller Kingdoms, cities, towns, villages and the holdings of ancient Knights and Barons, there was scarcely room for another castle. With young Princes growing up on every hand, Roger could well sympathize with the need of Ozma for more territory.

"Won't the Ozians have too long a way to come before they reach these new islands and countries we discover?" inquired the Read Bird, after staring at the map for some moments in silence.

"Not a bit of it!" Samuel dismissed Roger's objection with a snap of his fingers. "I hear the Wizard of Oz is working on a new fleet of airships, that will make crossing the desert and Nonestic a real lark and enable new settlers to reach these outlying islands in a day or less. So all we have to do is to proceed with our

discovering. Ozma will attend to the rest. This volcanic island may not be as useful as some of the others, but one can never tell. How about picking up a few islands for you, Ato, as we ride along?" The former pirate dropped his arm affectionately round the shoulders of his Royal Cook.

"No, thanks," grunted Ato, rolling cheerfully to his feet. "One's enough. What would I want with any more islands? Why I'd never get off on a voyage. But pick yourself a couple, Sammy, why don't you?"

"Who, ME?" Samuel Salt shook his head emphatically. "A ship's all I can handle and I wouldn't trade you two buckets of sea water for all the islands in the Nonestic. One ship and one crew's enough for me, and since you're my crew, you'd better turn in—we've had a hard day and another one coming. I'll take first watch, Cooky, here, shall have middle, and you Roger can be the early bird on morning watch."

"Ho hum! I'm right sleepy at that," admitted Ato, starting to heap up plates. "Give me a lift with the dishes, Roger, will you?"

"Oh, throw 'em overboard," directed Samuel Salt recklessly. "There's plenty more in the hold and I'm agin all extry labor."

"Hurray!" screamed Roger seizing the coffee pot and winging merrily through an open port.



"Avast! Avast there! Not my coffee pot!" pleaded Ato, making after the Read Bird with surprising speed considering his tonnage. "Stop you great Gossoon! How many times must I tell you I'm boss of the galley?" Catching Roger by the leg just as he reached the rail, Ato snatched back his precious coffee pot and hugged it protectively to his bosom. "Why I've just got this contraption broken in proper," he panted indignantly. "A coffee pot's like a pipe, it's got to be sweetened and seasoned. Heave over the plates and cups if you like," he went on, relenting a bit as he noted the keen disappointment on Roger's face, "but save the soup tureen. I'll wager there's not another that size on the ship and the Captain must have his soup. What a splendid pot of soup THIS would make,"

murmured Ato looking dreamily down at the sea, "a bit salty, perhaps, but full of snapper and porgy and tender young sea shoots. Why that foam's as near to whipping cream as anything I've ever gazed on."

Tearing himself reluctantly from the appetizing sight, the Royal Cook padded off to put the galley in order for the night, while Roger with loud squalls of glee dropped the plates and saucers one by one over the side. In this way the dishes were soon done, the cabin tidy and shipshape, and by eight bells the King and the Read Bird were sleeping soundly and Samuel Salt had the ship to himself.

First, he made a complete round of all decks, glanced at the barometer and compass, and furled the fore and mizzen topsails. Then he took the cooled piece of lava down to the hold. The strange signs and symbols had hardened, and labeling it carefully with the date and name of Salamander Island, Samuel placed it on his shelves for further study. Then returning to the main deck he set a portable ship's lantern on a coil of rope and settled down to fix a hot box for the Salamander. Selecting from the material he had brought from the hold an iron box with a glass lid, he covered the bottom with sand and pebbles. Knowing salamanders require hot water as well as hot air, he placed a tiny flat pan of water in the corner of the box to serve as a swimming pool. A burning glass in the day time and an alcohol lamp under the box at night would supply the necessary heat, and setting the whole contrivance on an iron tray in the cabin, Samuel went joyfully off to fetch the fire lizard.

The Salamander was still in the pot on the back of the stove, and giving her an experimental poke with his finger, Samuel was astonished to find her quite cool to the touch. This was surprising considering she could only live in the most intense heat. But without stopping to figure it out, the Captain picked her up between thumb and forefinger, carried her to the cabin and popped her into the iron box. He had already lighted the lamp under the box so that everything was red hot and cozy for her. The small captive seemed to appreciate her new quarters, wriggling over the hot pebbles and sand, then splashing gaily in her swimming pool.



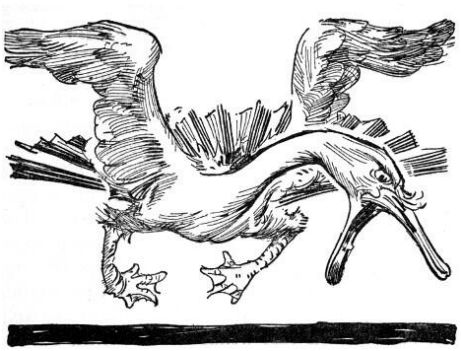
"Quite a girl!" sighed the pirate, resting his elbows on the table and gazing happily down at the first prize of the voyage. "You're going to be great company for me, Sally." As if she really understood, the lizard gave a squeak and tapped loudly on the glass lid with her tail. The pipe almost dropped from Samuel's mouth at Sally's strange behavior, and lifting the lid he peered inquisitively down at her. Before he had a chance to clap it shut, the Salamander hurled herself upward, landing smartly on the bridge of the Pirate's nose, from where she slid cleverly into the pipe itself.

"Well I'll be scuppered!" gasped the Royal Explorer looking slightly cross-eyed down the bridge of his nose as Sally coiled up comfortably in the bowl of the pipe. "The little rascal wants to keep me company, and so she shall, bless my boots, so she shall! Why this is plumb cute and cozy and something to write in my journal." Puffing away delightedly Samuel stepped out of the cabin and all during his watch, the little Salamander rested contentedly in his pipe. Sometimes she peered up inquisitively over the edge, but mostly she lay quietly on the smoking tobacco, looking with calm interest at the sky and the rippling sails over her head. Not only did she keep his pipe from going out, but never had it drawn so well. So, filled with a vast wonder and content, Samuel strode up and down the deck. Not till midnight when he roused Ato could he bear to put Sally back in her box and only then, after he had promised her another ride in the morning. But when morning came, Samuel had no time to keep his promise, for while Ato was cooking breakfast and the Captain himself catching forty winks in the cabin, the raucous voice of the Read Bird came whistling down from the foremast.

"Land Ho! Land! More Land. Island tuluward, Captain!"

Chapter 5: Patrippany Island

"All hands on deck! Come on! Come on!" yelled Samuel Salt running past Ato's galley dragging on his clothes as he ran. "There's an island tuluward, you lubber."



"Well, 'tain't a flying island is it?" Ato stuck a very red face out the door. "I guess it'll stay there till I turn the bacon, won't it? No cause to burn the biscuits just 'cause an island's sighted is there?" But in spite of his pretended indifference, the ship's cook shoved all his pans on the back of the stove and hurried out on deck. "Rich and jungly, this one," he observed, resting his arms comfortably on the rail, "and from what I can see a good place to grow bananas and whiskers. Look, Sammy, even the trees have beards."

"Moss," muttered Samuel Salt striding over to the wheel. "Fly ashore Roger and see whether there's a good place to put in."

Twittering with importance and curiosity, the Read Bird flung himself into the air. In ten minutes he was back to report a wide river cutting through the center of the island from end to end. The foliage was so dense, Roger had not been able to discover any signs of habitation, but after viewing the mouth of the river through his glasses, the Captain decided to take a chance, and sail through.

"Now, Sammy, let's not do anything hasty," begged the ship's cook lifting his floury hands in warning, "nor try to conquer a country on an empty stomach. This may be an important island, so after we eat, let us put on our proper clothes and plant the Oz flags with dignity and decorum."

"Spoken like a King and a seaman," approved Samuel Salt, "and if my eye does not deceive me, I'll have the ship in the river as soon as you have the coffee in the pot. Then we'll ride in with the tide, put on our discovering togs and proceed with the business of the day."

So while Ato returned to his galley and the Read Bird to his post in the foremast, Samuel swung the Crescent Moon in toward the island. Each felt a slight twinge of uneasiness as the ship left the open sea and began to slip rapidly up the broad new and unnavigated jungle stream. Vine covered trees pressed close to the banks, and birds and monkeys in the branches kept up an incessant screech and chattering. A flock of greedy pelicans flopped comically after the ship and as they penetrated deeper and deeper into the jungle it almost seemed as if they were entering some dim green land of goblins.

"A fine target we make for anyone who cares to shoot at us," moaned Ato, as he waddled backward and forward between the cabin and galley with cups and covered dishes. "Ugh!"

"Yes, I wouldn't be surprised to feel an arrow in my back any minute now," assented Samuel Salt brightly, "though I must say I'd much prefer a fried mackerel in my stomach."

"Come on then," shuddered Ato, in no wise cheered by Samuel's remarks, "breakfast's ready and we may as well eat before we die."



"Now never say die!" roared the Royal Explorer of Oz, touching the buttons to furl sail and yelling to Roger to let go the anchor. "Never say die—say dee—dee-scovery is our aim and purpose, Mates. Dee-scovery with a hi de di dide di dough!" sang Samuel vociferously to keep up his own spirits. Finally with the ship motionless amidstream the three shipmates sat down to breakfast. Their nerves were tense and their ears cocked for signs of approaching natives, but except for the noise of the birds and monkeys and the occasional splash of some river creature, there was no sound to indicate the ship had been sighted by the islanders.

"Nobody's home," concluded Samuel, finishing off his third cup of coffee at one toss and hurrying off to his cabin. Roger, having only Oz flags and no shore togs to bother him, generously offered to clear away the dishes and amused himself by throwing scraps and the rest of the biscuits to the pelicans. He had just tossed over the last biscuit when Ato appeared in a grand satin coat and breeches, long cape and three-cornered hat. The elegance of his apparel was somewhat marred by the bread board he had belted round his middle and the bread knife and blunderbuss he had stuck through his sash.

"Ha, hah!" roared Samuel Salt, giving the bread board a resounding whack. "Something to stay your stomach, EH?" Samuel himself was as stylishly attired as the King, his three-cornered hat at a dashing angle. Under his arm he had two pairs of tremendously long stilts. "No need for us to get all grubby lowering the boat. We'll wade ashore this time," explained Samuel as Ato's eyes grew round and questioning. "Easy as walking on crutches; just watch me, Mate."

Now Samuel, it must be confessed, had been practicing stilting on Elbow Island, so naturally it came easy to him. First he put his stilts over the side, then vaulting the rail, he seized the tops and settled his feet in the cross pieces at one

jump and started walking calmly up and down gleefully calling for Ato to follow. It all looked so simple, Ato handed the basket of lunch he had packed to Roger, and seizing his stilts began anxiously feeling around for the river bottom. Satisfied that it was solid, he climbed boldly up on the rail.

"That's it! That's it!" applauded Samuel. "Now grab the tops, Mate, and start coming."

"Chee tree—tee—hee—!" screeched the monkeys derisively as Ato clung precariously to the rail with one hand and maneuvered his stilts with the other. By some miracle of balance the fat King actually managed to mount and hold on to his perilous walking sticks. Then with a long quivering breath he heaved one forward. He was about to take another step when a desperate scream from Roger almost caused him to topple over backwards.

"'Gators!" croaked the Read Bird, beating his wings together violently. "Watch out for those 'gators."

"Why bother him with gaiters at a time like this? They look perfectly all right to me." Samuel Salt frowned up at Roger.

"Not his gaiters, river 'gators, alligators, CROCODILES!" wailed Roger, beginning to fly in agonized circles. "Crocodiles and WORSE."

Samuel, eyeing what he had supposed to be a pile of rotten logs on the river bank, saw dozens of the slimy saurians slide into the water and come savagely toward them.



"Back to the ship! Back to the ship!" babbled the Read Bird, clutching Ato's collar with a frantic claw. But the King was too frightened to move. The sight of the bleary-eyed river monsters made him tremble so violently his stilts twittered and swayed like trees in a hurricane. He could not for the life of him take a step in either direction. With a loud cry Samuel started to help him, but a crocodile reached Ato first. Its jaws closed with a vicious snap on the King's left stilt and with a heart-rending shriek Ato plunged into the slimy river.

"There, there! Now you've done it!" sobbed Roger. "Fed the kindest soul who ever served a ship's company to a parcel of crocodiles!" Dropping the Oz flags and lunch basket, he made an unsuccessful grab for his Master's arm. But even if he had caught it, Ato's great weight would have pulled them both under, and now only a circle of bubbles showed where the luckless explorer had

disappeared. Firing his blunderbuss to frighten off the rest of the crocodiles, Samuel, striking left and right with his stilts, propelled himself forward, while Roger pecked futilely at the monster that had felled his Master. But just as Samuel, after boldly driving off the dragon-like creature, prepared to dive in and save Ato or perish with him, a dripping head appeared above the water.



"Thank you. Thank you very much!" murmured a mild voice. "I haven't had as nice a present as this since I was an itty bitty baby. Now what can I do for YOU?" Neither Samuel nor Roger could speak a word, for where the King had gone down, a tremendous hippopotamus was coming up, the lunch basket hanging carelessly out of a corner of its mouth. For a wild moment Samuel thought his enormous friend and shipmate had been transformed by some witchcraft into this ponderous beast. He even imagined he caught an expression of Ato's in the monster's moist eye. But this gloomy idea was soon dispelled, for, as the creature rose higher out of the water, they could see a desperate and bedraggled figure sprawled across its slippery back.

"Ahoy, Mate!" choked Samuel, his heart thumping like a trip hammer. "Is it really you? Are you safe, then?"

"Safe!" quavered the half-drowned and mud-covered King of the Octagon Isle. "SAFE?" He peered dizzily at the churning crocodiles just a boat's length away, and his voice cracked and broke. "I never felt safer in my life. What am I riding, a whale or an elephant?"

"A river horse," explained the hippopotamus, looking kindly over her shoulder. Then, as the crocodiles began to hiss and roar and come rolling toward them, she gave a ferocious bellow and snort. "Away with you! Be off, you river scum!" she squealed viciously. "These travelers are MINE. Shoot your fire stick, Master Long Legs. That will fix them." For a moment the crocodiles held their post, then, as Samuel fired his gun repeatedly, they began to slide sullenly across the river to the opposite bank. "Hold fast, Master Short Legs, and I'll soon have you ashore," wheezed the hippopotamus, speaking out of the corner of her mouth so as not to drop the picnic basket.

"Yes, yes, but what then?" shuddered Ato, trying to get a finger hold on the monster's slippery neck.

"Why, then, we'll both tell our stories, and after that I'll eat," snorted the river

horse, paddling joyously toward the bank.

"You'll EAT!" groaned Ato, ready to roll back into the river. "Oh, my father and mother and maiden aunts!"

"Did you hear that?" Dropping to Samuel's shoulder, Roger whispered fiercely. "Quick now, a shot behind the ear, before it gets any further. Are you going to do nothing while this ravenous monster carries off my poor Master?"

"Sh-hh!" warned Samuel, holding up his finger. "These creatures do not eat meat or men. They're herbivorous, my lad, and this one seems uncommonly kind and friendly. But what puzzles me—" the Royal Explorer looked intently into the face of the Read Bird. "What puzzles me is to find this one talking our language. To my knowledge, only animals in Oz, a few in Ev and you on the Octagon Isle have the gift of speech. And I tell you, Mate, this is a valuable discovery, and a simply splendid specimen of a pachydermatous talking aquatic." Whether the last few words in this sentence or a stone in the river bottom tripped up the Captain, Roger never knew, but without any warning Samuel turned a sudden back somersault into the river, going under as completely as Ato had done.

"Ugh—gr—ugh!" he gurgled, coming up full of mud and disgust. "How did that happen?"

"Stilts!" sniffed Roger, whose wings had saved him from going down with Samuel. "A splendid way to get ashore, Master Salt, so neat and tidy. And a fine Discoverer you look now."

Sighing deeply, Samuel watched his stilts floating out of reach, then shaking his head violently to get the water out of his eyes, he swam thoughtfully after the hippopotamus. As he dragged himself up on the bank, a monkey swinging by its tail from the lower branches of a tree snatched his three-cornered hat and scittered all the way to the tree top, at which all the other monkeys let out shrill hoots of mocking merriment.

"Ah! The welcome committee!" sniffled Ato, rolling off the hippopotamus. "Well, Sammy, wherever it is, here we are and a nice mess you've made of the landing. Clothes ruined, weapons gone," (Ato felt his middle dejectedly for his bread knife and blunderbuss), then hitching up the bread board at his waist looked long and accusingly at the Leader of the Expedition.

"Now you mustn't mind a little mud," said the hippopotamus, setting down the picnic basket and gazing from one to the other with frank interest and curiosity. "Mud is beautiful and SO healthy."

"Not for me," frowned Samuel Salt, endeavoring to remove the thick green slime from his hair and ears with his damp silk handkerchief. "But I suppose we'll dry off in time and—"

"Proceed with the business of the day," finished Ato sarcastically, as he squeezed the water out of his silk pantaloons and coat tails. "But I hope you don't mind my saying that a seaman should stick to his boats, Samuel. If I had not fallen in with this kind and obliging hippopotamus, I'd have been a crocodile's lunch by this time."

"Oh, I'd have got you out somehow," muttered Samuel, smoothing back his hair sulkily. "And those stilts really saved your life. Suppose that animal had bitten your leg instead of your stilt? By the way, what's the name of this island, Mate?" Anxious to change the subject, Samuel turned to Ato's tremendous rescueress.

"Mate?" repeated the hippopotamus, wiggling her ears inquiringly, "What may that mean?"

"It is what a seaman calls his crew and his friends," explained Samuel, grinning in spite of himself.

"Seaman? Mate?" mused the hippopotamus in a rapt voice. "How cozy, how beautiful!" Overcome with emotion, the mighty monster leaned forward and lapped up the picnic basket, Oz flags, lunch and everything. "I shall remember this as long as I live," she assured them with a gulp as one of the flags went sideways down her throat. "Nikobo, Little Daughter of the Biggenlittle River People, bids you welcome to Patrippany Island."

"Little daughter!" exclaimed Ato in a smothered voice. "Ha, ha! Patrippany Island. Ho, ho! This is interesting. I knew there was a trip in it somewhere, a wet trip for us, eh, Samuel?"

"But what I don't understand," said the Royal Explorer of Oz, briskly massaging his beard with his handkerchief, "is how you happen to speak our language. Do all the creatures on this Island talk? I don't mean that monkey chatter above."

"No, none of the other creatures here speak the language of man," answered Nikobo solemnly. "I never knew I could speak it myself till five moons ago last Herb Day."

"Herb Day? Dear, dear and dear! How confusing it all grows," sighed Ato, emptying the water out of his hat which had somehow survived his river ducking. "Do you suppose she means Thursday? Roger! ROGER! Keep away from those monkeys. Do you wish to lose all your tail feathers?"

"Oh, it's all very simple," Nikobo rolled her eyes from side to side. "One day I eat herbs and that is Herb Day. One day I eat twigs and that is Twig Day, and one day I eat grass and that is Grass Day, and—"

"And one day you eat lunch baskets and Oz flags, and I suppose that makes it Flag Day," chuckled Roger, coming down from a little excursion in the tree tops.

"She's swallowed the Oz flags, Skipper, and if that doesn't make her a citizen of Oz, I'll eat my feathers."

"Go ahead, if it will keep you any quieter," said Samuel Salt, who did not want this interesting conversation interrupted by Roger's nonsense. "So you only began to speak our language five moons ago last Herb Day? What made you do that?"

"A boy," confided Nikobo with a ponderous wag of her head.

"Ah, now we're getting somewhere." Feeling in his pocket, Samuel pulled out a small note book and pencil, still damp but usable. "Was it a native boy?" he asked eagerly.

"No, no, certainly NOT." The hippopotamus panted a little at the very idea of such a thing. "The Leopard Men speak a strange roaring language I have never been able to make head or tail of. Besides, to speak to them would not be safe nor desirable. The Leopard Men have long tusks and spears and—"



"Leopard Men!" yelled Ato, flinging both arms round the trunk of a tree. "Oh! Oh! and OH! I wish we were safely back at pirating, Sammy. Here we are marooned on this miserable monkey island, inhabited by Leopard Men, surrounded by crocodiles and no way of getting back to the ship."

"You forget me," murmured the hippopotamus. Lumbering over to Ato, she gave him a gentle nudge with her moist pink snout. "Nikobo, Little Daughter of the Biggenlittle River People, will carry you anywhere you wish to go."

Chapter 6: A Little Wild Man



"Not yet, not yet," protested Samuel Salt as Ato made a clumsy attempt to mount the hippopotamus. "Why, we've only just come, Mate. We can't go without seeing these Leopard Men and this strange boy who speaks our language."

"Oh, CAN'T we?" Drawing in his breath, Ato made a flying leap at Nikobo, and this time managing an ear hold, pulled himself determinedly up on her moist, slippery back. "Goodbye, Samuel," said the King with a firm wave of his hand. "If you bring any Leopard Men back to the Crescent Moon, you can discover

yourself another cook. No Leopard Men. Mind, now!"

"Oh, you needn't worry about that." The hippopotamus closed one eye and smiled knowingly to herself. Thoroughly annoyed by the desertion of Ato and the superior grin of the river horse, Samuel snatched a long rapier from his belt and glowered belligerently around him.

"Shiver my timbers! You think I'm not strong enough nor smart enough to fight these savages? HUWHERE are these Leopard Men?" roared the former Pirate in such a reverberating voice the monkeys fled silently to the tree tops, and even Roger put his head under his wing.

"Gone, all gone!" explained Nikobo as she started calmly down toward the river bank.

"You mean there are no Leopard Men on this Island now?" Looking with horror and aversion at the crocodile-infested river, Ato began tugging at Nikobo's ear. "Not so fast, my good creature! Wait a moment, my buxom lass! Perhaps I'll stay with Sammy after all."

"Well, just as you say." With scarcely a pause in her stride, the hippopotamus turned round and waddled amiably back to the strip of sand where Samuel Salt stood staring sternly into the jungle beyond.

"This is a great disappointment to me, Mates," sighed the Captain of the Crescent Moon mournfully wringing out the lace ruffles of his cuffs. "To have taken a Leopard Man back to the Court of Oz would have been an achievement worth the whole voyage."

"Now there's where we're different," murmured Ato, settling into a more comfortable position on the back of the river horse. "I myself would rather be disappointed than speared by a savage, and I don't care how many Leopard Men I miss seeing. Rather be spared than speared, ha, ha! Tee, HEE, HEE!" Ato chuckled from sheer relief.

"Shall I fly back to the ship for some more Oz flags?" Roger flapped his wings inquiringly. "If the Leopard Men are really gone, then Patrippany Island is ours without a spear thrown."

"That's so," mused Samuel Salt, thrusting his rapier back into its sheath and beginning to show a little interest in the island itself. "Fly ahead, my Hearty."

"And bring back some ship's biscuit," called Ato. "All this diving and mud turtling has left me weak as a fish. And while we're waiting for Roger, perhaps Nikobo will tell us a little about these Islanders. Were they little or big, black or brown?"



"Yellow," answered the hippopotamus gravely. "Big and yellow with brown spots all over their hides. They had brown hair, mane and eyes, and rough snarling voices. They used neither huts nor shelter, but roamed like the animals through the jungle, hunting, fishing and fighting. They had hollowed out logs for use in the water and last Twig Day every Leopard man, woman and child climbed into the long boats and paddled out to sea. Shortly afterward—" Nikobo's eyes grew round and shiny at the mere memory, "shortly afterward a great hurricane arose and my family and I, watching from the mouth of the Biggenlittle River, saw the boats and men swept under the waves. Some of the logs floated back to the islands, but the Leopard Men and women we never saw again."

"Not even ONE?" exclaimed Samuel peevishly.

"Not even one," Nikobo assured him solemnly. "And to tell the truth," the hippopotamus flashed a sudden and expansive sigh, "it is much better and safer without them. The one problem is the boy, and I've been feeding him myself."

"Oh, yes, the boy who speaks our language," mused Samuel, still lost in bitter reflections of the Leopard Men he should never see face to face.

"What've you been feeding him?" asked Ato, suspiciously. "How would a hippopotamus know what to feed a boy?"

"I do the best I can," said Nikobo in a hurt voice. "Every day I collect fresh roots, herbs and grasses for him."

"Roots, herbs—grasses! Merciful Mustard! A boy's being fed on roots, herbs and grasses, Sammy. Did you ever hear of anything more ridiculous in your life?"

"No worse than spinach," mumbled Samuel Salt. "But SAY, look here—" The Royal Explorer of Oz raised his arm imperiously. "What is a small boy doing on this island? How'd he get here in the first place, and where is he now?"

"Follow me," directed Nikobo in a dignified voice. "Follow me and you shall know all." As Roger appeared at that moment with the Oz flags and biscuits, the little procession immediately got under way, Ato calmly riding behind.

On her many visits to the strange boy, Nikobo had worn a path through the tangled growth of vines and bush. Tenuous trees dropped their branches over this path and stretched out their gnarled roots to trip the unwary traveler.

Several times Roger let out hoarse squeals as a huge snake coiled along the limb of a tree, thrust out its ugly head. Gaudy flowers from the vines that closely entwined every tree, filled the air with a damp sleepy fragrance, and Samuel Salt, darting his eyes left and right, held his blunderbuss ready for any savage beast that might spring upon them. But the jungle creatures, thinking the Leopard Men had returned, slunk further and further into the green shadows and without any mishaps or encounters, Nikobo brought the explorers to a small clearing in the whispering tangle of green.

Here they were suddenly confronted by a stoutly built cage, its bars constructed of saplings set scarcely an inch apart. On a heap of grass in a corner of the cage crouched the lonely figure of a little boy clothed in a single leopard skin.

"Well, goosewing my topsails!" panted Samuel Salt, deceived at first by the leopard skin. "A little wild man, a Leopard boy, as I'm a salt sea sailor!"

"It's nothing of the kind," Nikobo contradicted him sharply. "Can't you see he is white and has teeth as straight as your own instead of tusks? He's not like the Leopard Men at all."

"But who put him in this cage? What's he done, and what's he doing here?" Slipping off Nikobo's back, Ato pressed his face close to the bars of the strange prison.



"I am waiting for my people to come and rescue me," stated the boy, rising with great dignity from his bed of grass. Folding his arms, he looked haughtily out at the explorers. "Who are these men, Nikobo?" he inquired sternly. "Why have you brought them here?"

"Because they seemed friendly and speak your language," puffed the hippopotamus, beaming lovingly at her small charge. "Because I thought they might break these bars and set you free. They have a hollow log seventy times as large as the hollowed logs of the Leopard Men. In this they could easily carry you over the waters and back to your own people. I've tried to break this miserable hutch dozens of times," explained Nikobo, turning to Samuel Salt. "But the saplings are sunk so deep, I've been afraid I'd crush Tandy as well as the cage if I pushed too hard."

"Quite likely," said Samuel Salt, rapping the bars with his knuckles. "We'll have to fetch an ax from the ship. But who shut you up here, little Lubber, and how long have you been prisoner on this island?"

"Five months and a half," answered the boy after consulting one of the bars in

the corner of his cage. "I've made a nick in this bar with my teeth for every day I have been here."

"Well, that's all over now, you poor child, you!" Ato's voice shook with indignation as he looked in at the little boy whose every rib showed plainly under the skin. In fact, a heap of grass and dried roots in the cage made the kind-hearted monarch shudder with distaste and sympathy. "You shall come with us and eat like a King," he promised, nodding his head cheerfully, "and learn to be an able-bodied seaman to boot." Instead of looking grateful or pleased, the boy whom the hippopotamus had called "Tandy" merely stood looking between the bars of his cage.

"Why should I go with you?" he said finally and wearily. "You look wild and dangerous to me, and far worse than the Leopard Men. Here, at least I have Kobo to take care of me, and who knows what further perils and hardships I should suffer at sea?"

"Ho! HO! And how do you like that, my lads?" Roger rocked backward and forward on Samuel Salt's shoulder. "The young one speaks truly. If you could but see yourselves, my Hearties." Now both Ato and Samuel had forgotten their plunge in the river, but with their hair and clothing still covered with mud and slime they looked the veriest rogues and rascals. And while Ato regarded himself with embarrassment and discomfiture, Samuel took a quick step forward.

"SO!" roared the great seaman angrily. "So, you don't trust us, eh? Well, stay here if you wish and grow up like a monkey. You look like a little wild man already."

"STOP!" Nikobo quivered all over with resentment. "You must not call Tandy a wild man."



"Don't mind." The boy drew the leopard skin around him with quiet dignity. "I can bear it. I have borne far worse. I can bear anything. I am a KING and the son of a King's son! Tell them to go away, Kobo."

"Now, Now, NOW! This is nothing but nonsense." Ato clapped his hands sharply. "However we look, my young squab, you are in good and royal company. My mate here, Captain Salt, is Captain of the Crescent Moon, Royal Explorer of Oz, and a Knight, besides. I, though at present a ship's cook, am King of the Octagon Isle, and Roger, here, is as Royal a Read Bird as ever wagged a bill and wing. If you say you are a King, we will have to believe you, though 'tis hardly credible." Ato stared with round eyes at the matted hair and dirty body of the little

prisoner. "If you say you are a King we must believe you, but in return you must believe us, and stop all this hoity toity talk and clishmaclatter."

"He speaks the plain truth." Nikobo pressed her huge snout close to the bars. "Even I can detect the signs of royalty in this fat and goodly person whom I just this morning helped out of the river. You must go with them, Tandy, and they will carry you back to your own Kingdom."

"But I tell you, I'd rather stay here with YOU," wailed the little boy, relaxing a moment from his kingly and overbearing attitude.

"Roger, fetch the AX." Samuel Salt spoke so loud and sternly Nikobo lapsed into a shocked silence and Tandy hastily drew back into a far corner of his cage.

"Never argue with a sea-going man," whispered Ato, winking solemnly as Roger flew off to obey Samuel's order. Having settled the matter in his own mind, Samuel turned his back on Tandy and began to examine with deep interest the fungus growth on one of the gnarled old trees. "So you really are a King?" Leaning against the huge body of Nikobo, Ato folded his hands comfortably on his stomach and regarded the boy in the leopard skin earnestly. "Now what country do you hail from and what do they call you at home?"

"I am Tazander Tazah of Ozamaland," announced the boy proudly, "the land of the creeping bird and flying reptile. Ozamaland on the long continent of Tarara is my home."

"OZAMALAND!" shouted Samuel Salt, swinging round like a teetotum. "So there really IS such a place. I have always said so, Ato, but no one would believe me. Lies to the east of here, doesn't it, sonny, and is twice as large as any known land bordering on the Nonestic?" Somewhat impressed to find that Samuel Salt knew something of his homeland, the little boy nodded. "And do you suppose we could snare one of those creeping birds and flying reptiles if we managed to reach Ozamaland?" Grasping the bars of the cage, Samuel peered anxiously into the young King's face.

"Do you suppose you ever could reach Ozamaland?" sighed Tazander, returning Samuel's eager look with gloomy aloofness. "Do you know that a ship has never touched our shores?"

"Then the Crescent Moon shall be the first!" cried Samuel Salt, snapping his fingers joyfully. "Why, this will be tremendous and the most momentous discovery in a thousand years! But how do you happen to be so far from Ozamaland yourself?" asked Samuel Salt immediately afterward. "Did you come by air or sea?"

"That I cannot tell." Tazander seated himself soberly on a log before he continued. "One night I was sleeping soundly in my tower in the White City, next

thing I remember I was here in this jungle. The Leopard Men, wild and savage as they were, fed me when they remembered on raw fish and chunks of hard, bitter bread they made from the roots of the Brima Tree. But I could not understand their talk, nor they mine, and till Kobo found me a month after my imprisonment I had no one to talk to at all. But she has come every day to keep me company and try to set me free, and since the Leopard Men were drowned she has fed me, too. See, through this little door." Tazander opened a small door in the bars and stuck both hands through.



"But how did you learn the language?" asked Ato, turning round to gaze up into Nikobo's huge face.

"I don't know," said Nikobo with an excited gulp. "I just started to say 'Hello!' and instead of saying it in hippopotamy, there I was talking a strange language which I could understand as well as my own. And in this language Tandy answered me, much to my delight and pleasure."

"Strange, very strange." Ato shook his head in a puzzled manner. "Well, all I say is, it was lucky for this small fellow that you happened along, and once we have him aboard he'll soon forget all these hardships and unpleasant experiences."

"I'll never forget Kobo," said the young King, backing stiffly away from the outstretched arms of Ato.



"And Kobo'll never forget YOU," sniffed the hippopotamus. "The talk of the river people seems dull and stupid since I've talked to Tandy. None of the herd really need me and I don't know what I'm going to do—whoo—Hoo HOO WHOOO!" Rocking from side to side, Nikobo began to sob as if her heart would break, so violently in fact, Samuel Salt covered both ears and Ato, alarmed at the enormous grief of the gigantic beast, tried to put his arms around her.

"Here, here!" begged the ship's cook, thumping her hard upon the back. Opening the bag of biscuits Roger had brought from the ship, Ato handed two to Tandy and began shoving the rest as fast as he could down the vast throat of the grief-stricken hippopotamus. After each biscuit, Nikobo choked and sobbed to herself, but on the whole, they seemed to comfort her, and when the Read Bird finally returned with the ax she watched almost cheerfully as Samuel Salt, with well-

aimed blows, demolished Tandy's jungle cage. As the last side crashed down and without giving Tandy time to argue any further, Samuel Salt seized the boy firmly in both arms and set him down on the back of the hippopotamus. Then, giving Ato a hand up behind him, the Captain of the Crescent Moon sternly led the way to the edge of the island. Roger, waving an Oz flag, flew ahead screaming defiantly to the monkeys and parrots that infested the island, "WAY, WAY! Way for the Royal Discoverer of Oz! Way for the King of the Octagon Isle! Way for Nikobo, Little Daughter of the Biggenlittle River People. Way for Tazander Tazah, King and son of a King's son! WAY—ay—ayyyy!"

Chapter 7: Strange Specimens for Samuel Salt



With no one to challenge their going but the birds and monkeys, the little band made its way back to the sandy beach. Tandy, perhaps because he had been so long pent up in the silent jungle and because he was by nature a naturally sober and solemn little boy, said nothing. Not even the Crescent Moon, riding so proudly at her anchor, seemed to arouse any interest or enthusiasm in this strange young Ozamalander.

"Well, here we are!" exclaimed Ato, heartily thankful to be in sight of the ship again. "And I hope you'll not mind ferrying us out to the boat, Nikobo; those crocodiles still look hungry and I've no notion of being crocked for the rest of my life."

"Any time you say," grunted the hippopotamus, squeaking a listless greeting to a company of her own relatives who were rolling lazily about in the muddy river water.

"Avast and belay and what's the hurry?" Leaning his ax against a tree, Samuel moistened a finger and held it up. "The wind's against us, Mate, so we'll have to wait for the tide. Not only that, but Roger and I must survey the island and dig up some more interesting specimens to take back to the ship." After a long and rather quizzical look at Tandy, Samuel turned and swung along the beach, the Read Bird flapping joyously behind him.

"Run up and down a bit," advised Ato, sliding down from Nikobo's back. "Your legs must need stretching. Wonder if there's anything to eat around here or hereabouts? Aha, those look like oranges, a wild orange grove, as I'm a cook and a seaman. Come along, young one, and help me gather a few."

"A King and son of a King's son does not come and go at another's bidding," announced Tandy, stiffly, alighting from the hippopotamus.

"Merciful mothers! What's this?" gasped Ato, blinking his eyes rapidly. "As complete a case of ingrowing Royalitis as I've ever had the misfortune to encounter. Well, since it's every King for himself, then I'll be leaving you, sonny and son of a King's sonny. Watch out for him, Kobo, he's probably real important to himself."

"You should not speak like that," reproved the hippopotamus as Ato disappeared into the orange grove, "after all, the big and fat one is himself a King."



"Pooh, King of some potty little island," sniffed Tandy, leaning wearily against a palm. "Break me a cocoanut, Kobo, I'm thirsty." With a discouraged sigh Nikobo trod on one of the cocoanuts, cracking it from end to end and then, because she was a generous and kindly creature, she cracked several more for Ato when he should return. Sitting back on her haunches, she anxiously watched while Tandy downed the cocoanut milk, then, stretching out in the sand, fell unconcernedly asleep. Thus Ato found them when he emerged from the orange grove an hour later. His elegant explorer's cape was knotted to form a sack and bursting full of the small sweet fruit of the wild orange trees.

"These will make us a fine mess of marmalade when I get back to the ship," panted the perspiring monarch, settling down with his back cozily to Nikobo's. "How's young Saucebox?"

"All right." The hippopotamus nodded in Tandy's direction. "He is so small and tired," she murmured worriedly, "and you must know he has been exposed in an open cage in the jungle for five long months with only a miserable hippopotamus for company."

"Miserable hippopotamus," snorted Ato indignantly. "You're a very superior animal, my girl. I'd consider it an honor to converse with you any day. Did you crack these cocoanuts for me?" As Nikobo, trying bashfully to conceal her pleasure at Ato's praise, admitted she had, the King took several long, satisfying draughts from the shells. "Now, don't you worry about that young sprout," he advised kindly as Nikobo continued to gaze mournfully at the sleeping boy. "We'll make allowances for his High and Mighty Littleness and set him down in his own country. That is, if we ever manage to find it, though I must say he'll not

be much use nor company for us. Ahoy! Here comes Sammy. Wonder what he's found?" As a matter of fact, the Royal Explorer of Oz looked more like a walking window box than a seaman. Long vines hung from his neck and trailed from his pockets. His arms were crammed with spiked and prickly plants and on his head he balanced a package of sea shells tied up in his shore-going coat.

"What you going to do, start a conservatory?" roared Ato as Roger helped the Captain set his treasures on the ground.

"Rare and unusual, all of 'em," said Samuel, dropping down beside Ato and looking with complete satisfaction at his curious collection.

"Mind those yellow creepers," warned Nikobo, wiggling her vast snout warningly. "Those purple flowered plants in the middle are treacherous, too. They are tumbleweeds, Master Long Legs, and 'tis from them Patrippany Island gets its name. When the Leopard Men fought, they would fling these weeds at one another, and I've seen them falling about for hours, neither side being able to advance a step or even stand up."

"Tumbleweeds!" breathed Samuel ecstatically. "You don't SAY! Why, these might come in real handy if we ever get in a tight place. I'll give a few to the Wizard of Oz and to the Red Jinn when we get back from this voyage. And what about the yellow creepers, Mate? Are they fighting plants, too?"

"The creepers, if uprooted and thrown at an animal or man, will creep rapidly after him, catching him no matter how fast he runs and tying him up so tight he will not be able to move until the vine withers," explained Nikobo solemnly. "I happen to know from an experience I had with one of these vines in my early youth."

"Creeping vines," shivered Ato, moving as far away from Samuel's collection as possible. "Just keep them away from me, Sammy. What right have such things on a ship?"

"Oh, they'll be harmless enough when they're potted," answered Samuel easily. "And a splendid weapon they'll make for some up and coming country."

"Better keep them for ourselves," advised Roger, fluttering down to Samuel's shoulder. "Exploring's a dangerous business, if you ask me, Master Salt."

"Well, you'll have to admit that it's been pretty safe and successful so far," said Samuel, clasping his hands behind his head and gazing contentedly up at the waving fronds of the palm trees.

"SAFE!" The ship's cook began to shake and quiver all over. "Ho, ho! Safe? Especially sailing round that volcano and going swimming with the crocodiles! Safe! You'll be the death of me yet, Sam-u-el. Have you planted your Oz flags and told the wild creatures in the jungle about their new sovereign?"



Roger nodded his head importantly. "We've raised Oz flags on the tallest trees on the East, South, West and North sides of the Island. I flew across and got a bird's eye view while the Captain walked clear 'round. We've discovered it's bean shaped, King dear, the exact shape of a kidney bean, and a fine fertile place for settlers and prospectors from Oz."

"Yes, all they have to do is cut down a million trees, drain the swamps and train the wild beasts in the jungle to be as polite and considerate as Nikobo here."

"Well, what of it? That's their problem." Samuel stretched himself, luxuriously snapping each finger to see that it was still working. "And now, since our part is done, what do you say to waking this son of a King's son and getting aboard the ship? The tide'll run out in a couple of hours and carry us along." Tazander had been awake for some time listening to the conversation with closed eyes. Now sitting up, he calmly spoke his mind.

"I'm not going with you," he stated grandly. "I'm going to stay here with Kobo till my own people come for me."

"Hah! Mutiny!" Leaping to his feet, Samuel glared down at the puny youngster with real anger and exasperation. "If you think I'm going to leave you on this island to be devoured by wild animals when Nikobo's back is turned, you don't know your pirates. CLIMB up on that animal. Lively, now!" Samuel looked so fierce and threatening, Ato felt rather sorry for the stubborn little King, but he was wasting his sympathy.

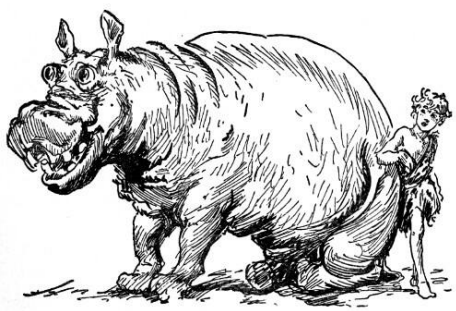
"I'm not going," said Tandy, settling more determinedly down into the sand. "And no one can make me."

"Don't say that! Don't say that!" Blubbering with grief at the thought of losing her small charge and shivering with anxiety lest he arouse to further anger this tall sea captain, Nikobo lumbered to her feet and began to whisper eagerly in Tandy's ear. During this short conference Samuel gathered up his specimens and Ato his oranges, and when both had finished the hippopotamus edged nervously forward.

"I've decided to go with you," she announced in a slightly shaken voice. "If I go, Tandy'll go, so I'll just GO!"

"WHAT?" roared Samuel Salt, dropping his shells and clapping his hand to his forehead. "Well, that practically solves everything!" Looking wildly from the hippopotamus to the Crescent Moon, Samuel had a dreadful vision of Nikobo rolling dangerously from side to side of his cherished vessel.

"What'll you eat?" demanded Roger, who was ever more practical than polite. "How'll we ever feed this enormous lady, Cook dear? Besides, she'll sink the ship."



"I'll be very quiet and stay wherever you put me," murmured Nikobo in a meek voice. "I'll go on a diet and eat whatever is left."

"Well, why couldn't she go?" proposed Ato, who already had formed a great liking for Tandy's devoted guardian. "Why couldn't she? Nice kind motherly creature that she is!"

"But a hippopotamus needs fresh water and tons of food and—" Then suddenly Samuel brought his hands together with a resounding smack.

"Have you thought of something?" asked Ato hopefully, shifting his oranges from one shoulder to the other.

"Yes," stated the former Pirate solemnly, "I have." Samuel was secretly delighted to have found a way to carry this superb herbivorous specimen back to Oz. "I'll build her a raft and tow her along after the ship. We'll stop at all the islands we come to for fresh water and grass, and meanwhile she'll have to do with salt baths and such food as we have in the hold."

"Oh, KOBO! Did you hear that?" Springing up with the first signs of life or feeling he had yet shown, Tandy flung himself on his huge champion and friend. "So you're really going. Then I'll go too."

"Can't be all bad, if he's as fond of her as all that," whispered Ato in Samuel's ear.

"Not bad, just a pest," wheezed Samuel, reaching for his ax. "Needs a taste of the rope, if you ask me." Then, while Nikobo went for a last swim in the Biggenlittle River and bade goodbye to her numerous and wondering relatives, Samuel felled trees, split wood, and with nails Roger fetched from the ship fashioned a splendid strong raft for their new pet. Round the edge he built a sturdy railing to keep Nikobo from sliding off in a rough sea. Ato and Roger, taking thought for the evening meal, heaped one end of the raft with grass and twigs and all the jungle roots they could gather. Without moving or offering to

help, Tandy sat watching, and just as the sun sank down behind the palms, a strange procession started out for the Crescent Moon. Ahead with the keg of nails soared Roger. Then came the hippopotamus moving like a small dreadnought through the water. On her back sat Ato, the haughty young King of Ozamaland, and Samuel Salt. Samuel rode last, holding in his hand the long cable he had attached to the raft and with which he meant to fasten it to the Crescent Moon.

Following his orders, Nikobo swam close to the side of the ship so Tandy and Ato could climb the rope ladder, then she paddled round to the stern where Samuel drew his cable through an iron ring in the ship's hull and made the raft fast. There was a runway at the back of the raft and the rails on that side let down so that Nikobo had no trouble clambering aboard. By pulling a rope with her teeth, she could raise or lower the back of her pen and take a swim whenever she felt the need of one. After giving her a bit of advice about voyaging, and seeing her comfortably settled, Samuel climbed the cable and nimbly pulled himself aboard his ship. Roger had already stowed their precious specimens in the hold and rubbing his hands with brisk satisfaction, the Captain of the Crescent Moon weighed anchor and dropped with the tide down the Biggenlittle River to the sea. Then touching the automatic controls, he set his sails to catch the evening breeze, adjusted his steering gear for a course east by sou'east and strode happily into his cabin. The Salamander chirped cheerfully as he passed her hot box and after tapping a cheerful greeting on the lid, the weary explorer stripped off his ruined and muddy shore-going outfit, took a shower and climbed thankfully back into his old sea clothes.

"Where's the pest?" he called out as Roger flew past the open port.

"Well, since he was so small and important," sniffed the Read Bird, waving a claw, "I gave him a large cabin to himself. I didn't think you and Ato would want him in here."



"Shiver my timbers, NO." Samuel looked ruefully across at the small berth the Philadelphia boy occupied on their last voyage. "He'll never be the seaman Peter was, nor the company either. He'd better keep out of my way, HAH! or I'll give him a taste of my belt." Snatching up his spyglass and looking as stern as a kind-hearted pirate well can, Samuel hurried out on deck.

Meanwhile, in the cabin next to the Captain's, Tandy stood regarding himself mournfully in the small glass over his sea chest. He too had taken a shower and at Roger's suggestion had donned one of Peter's old pirate suits.



"I am a King and the son of a King's son," muttered Tandy, staring sadly at the sallow reflection in the mirror. To tell the truth, the suit was not in the least becoming to the skinny and sullen young monarch.

"I am a King and son of a King's son and can bear anything," he repeated dismally.

"Then bear a hand with the dinner," yelled Roger, who had been peeking at him through the port hole. "All who eat must work, and under the hatches with lubbers!"

Pretending not to hear, Tandy sat resignedly on the side of his bunk, though he really was curious to look around the ship and see what Kobo was doing. From the galley came the cheerful rattle of pots and pans and the huge voice of Ato singing as he prepared the dinner. Gulls flew in excited circles all round the Crescent Moon, calling out their hoarse challenge and farewell, and Samuel Salt, leaning on the taffrail, gazed dreamily back at Patrippany Island. The Oz flags fluttering from the tall palms gave it quite a gay and festive appearance and in spite of not seeing the Leopard Men, Samuel felt he had done a good day's discovering.

"Ahoy, below! How you coming?" called Samuel, leaning down to look at Nikobo. The hippopotamus wagged her huge head.

"Fine! Just fine, Mate," she wheezed pleasantly.

"Hah! Good for you!" Samuel's face broke into a broad grin as Kobo remembered to call him "Mate." "We'll make an able-bodied seawoman of you yet, my lass!"



Chapter 8: Maxims for Monarchs



When Ato, banging boisterously on an iron frying pan with a wooden spoon, summoned all hands to dinner, Samuel and Roger responded with a rush. But Tandy remained sitting gloomily on his bunk.

"Now what's the matter?" demanded Samuel Salt as Roger, sent to call the young voyager, came flying back to the table.

"He says I may serve his dinner in the cabin," snickered Roger, popping a biscuit into his mouth and swallowing it whole.

"Well, don't you do it!" roared the Captain, bringing his fist down with an angry thump. "No use to start such nonsense!"

"But he's so thin and feeble. The poor child's just full of raw roots and jungle grass," murmured Ato, beginning to heap a platter with meat and vegetables. "Wait till he folds himself round some of these seafarin' rations. He'll be a different person."

"And he'd better be!" rumbled the Captain of the Crescent Moon, pulling in his chair. "And if you and Roger want to spoil the little pest, go ahead, but he'd better keep out of MY way. HAH!"

"I could drop the dinner on his head," suggested Roger helpfully as Ato handed him an appetizing tray for Tandy. "How would that be?"

"Utterly reprehensible, and conduct unbecoming in a Royal Read Bird and able-bodied seaman," chuckled the ship's cook, shaking his finger at Roger. "Why don't you try to help the little beggar and set him a good example?"

Now Roger, in spite of his sharp tongue, was really a sociable and kind-hearted bird and the sight of Tandy sitting so forlornly on his bunk made him regret his teasing speeches. After all, the little fellow was far from home and had had a hard time in the jungle.

"Here!" he puffed, setting down the tray and lighting the lantern. "This'll put feathers on your chest, young one, and mind you eat every scrap."



"Thank you," answered Tandy, so drearily that Roger with a shudder of distaste fled back to the cheerful company of Samuel and Ato. But later, when Samuel had gone below to pot the precious plants from Patrippany Island and the ship's cook was leaning over the rail conversing cozily with the hippopotamus, Roger flew back to Tandy's cabin resolved to help him if he could. With calm satisfaction he noted that Tandy had eaten everything on the tray. Lying on his back, the young King of Ozamaland was staring solemnly up at the beams over his bunk.

"Ahoy! And what goes on here?" cried Roger, setting down on the old sea chest. "How about a turn on deck, my lad, and a bit of chatter with the crew?"

"It is not seemly for a King and son of a King's son to talk with his inferiors," observed Tandy coldly.

"In-feer-iors!" screamed Roger, forgetting all his good intentions and mad enough to nip the youngster's nose right off. "Are you by any chance referring to me?"

"Ozamaland is a great and powerful country and I am its King," stated Tandy, turning his back on the Read Bird. At this Roger let out another screech, and then suddenly remembering the purpose of his visit, took a long breath to steady himself. When he spoke again his voice was both calm and reasonable.

"Ozamaland may be a great and powerful country and you may also be its King, but remember you are no longer in Ozamaland," explained Roger firmly. "You are on this ship by the express wish and kindness of the Captain and in the company of Kings and BETTER. WAIT!" Shaking a claw at Tandy's back, Roger flew off to fetch one of Ato's books from the shelf above the stove. Tandy was in the same position when he returned, but paying him no further attention, Roger pulled the lamp nearer and opened his volume.

"When a King is in the company of Kings," began the Read Bird impressively, "he is no longer a special or royal being, but merely a man among men, and as such must maintain his honor and standing by sheer worth and ability alone."

"Who says that? What are you reading?" Tandy sat up with sudden interest, for

his whole life had been spent in study and reflection and the voice of the Read Bird was not unlike the voice of Woodjabegoodja, his royal instructor at home.

"I am reading Maxims for Monarchs," answered Roger calmly, "a book of great authority and antiquity that has been used by the Rulers of Oz and Ev and the Nonestic Islands these many thousand years. No great and important country would think of being without a copy of this book," he continued severely.



"Strange, then, that I should not have heard of it," mused Tandy, looking not quite so sure of himself. "We have no Maxims for Monarchs in Ozamaland."

"Pooh, Ozamaland!" Roger dismissed the whole country with a shrug of his wing. "A country as young and unimportant as that would probably know nothing about such matters."

"You mean my country is not so old nor important as Oz and this two-penny island of your fat Master?" shouted Tandy angrily.

"Of course not. Why, it's not even been discovered, and whoever has been there?" demanded Roger disdainfully. "Take you, as its King, acting in this small up-country fashion—what CAN a fellow think? Here—" Shoving the book toward the disagreeable young monarch, the Read Bird urged him to look for himself. With a puzzled frown Tandy reread the passage Roger had just quoted.

"Well, even though your Master is a King, you're not a King and neither is Samuel Salt," said Tandy, looking at Roger with some of his former arrogance.

"Oh, isn't he? Well, just lay to this, young fellow," Roger shook his claw under Tandy's upturned nose. "Samuel Salt is Captain of this ship, a Knight and the Royal Discoverer of Oz, which makes him seventy times as important as you, King Pins. He not only is boss of the Crescent Moon, but he rules the sea, discovering countries for other Kings to govern, and if it were not for Samuel Salt and people like him, there wouldn't be any Kingdoms nor people like you to run them. See? As for me, I'm a Royal Read Bird and wouldn't be a King for a minute. I can live my own life and go and come as I please."

"Then while I'm on this ship I'm not a King at all," said Tandy wonderingly. "Then what am I? What am I supposed to do?" The little boy looked puzzled and positively frightened.

"Why, you're supposed to act like a person, that is, if possible," sniffed Roger, reaching over for his book and looking at Tandy sideways down his bill. "What are you besides a King? What can you do that is useful or interesting?"

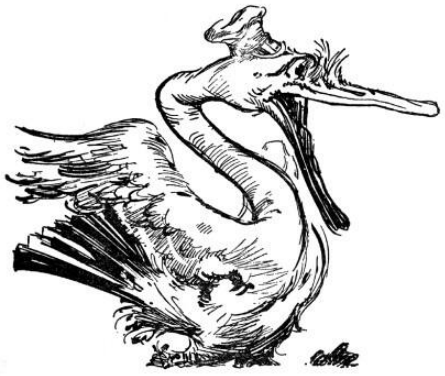
"Do, DO?" Tandy's voice rose shrilly. "Why—er—why, I can draw pictures and ride an elephant."

"Good!" Roger put up his claw to hide the grin that, in spite of his best efforts, began to spread round his bill. "Well, there isn't much call for drawing or elephant riding on a ship, but you can draw water to swab the decks and I'll teach you to ride the yards and follow the crosstrees to the main topgallant mast in the blowingest blow that ever blowed. And depend upon it, young one, you'll have more fun as a person than you ever had as a King. There's no place for having fun like a ship!"

"Fun!" said Tandy flatly and inquiringly. "What's that?"

"Tar and tobaccy jack! What are you tellin' me?" Roger almost toppled off the sea chest. "Do you mean to sit there like a dumb image and tell me you've never had any fun? Never felt so bursting full of ginger and happiness you could sing or do a sailor's horn pipe?"

"It is not seemly—" began the boy in a staid voice. "It is—"



"Seemly! Great goosefeathers, are you alive or aren't you?" gasped Roger. "What in paint did you do in that cussed country of yours before you got carried off and penned up like a pig in the jungle?"

Considering Roger's question, Tandy clasped and unclasped his hands nervously. "Well, you must know," he began in a very grown-up voice, "the King of Ozamaland is not allowed to mingle with the common people. In all things he is alone and set apart. So it was with my father and mother before they disappeared. So it is with me. Furthermore, it being prophesied that I would be carried off by an aunt in the middle years of my youth, it was deemed expedient and necessary to keep me locked away from danger in the White Tower of the Wise Men."

"Hurumph!" grunted the Read Bird, who had not heard so many long words since the voyage began. "And what did you do in this precious tower?"

"I studied," sighed Tandy, reclining wearily back on his pillows, "for there are many things a King must learn. But one hour of every evening I was permitted to walk about the garden on top of the tower and look down upon my Kingdom. On very great occasions I was allowed to come out and ride the white elephant in

the grand processions of state."

"Humph!" grunted Roger again, looking at Tandy with round dismayed eyes. "And with whom did you play?" he asked after a little silence.



"Play?" Again Tandy's voice was politely inquiring.

"The word was play," insisted the Read Bird doggedly. "With whom did you run about, play tag, checkers, pirates or go fishing?"

Tandy looked confused and Roger shook his head sorrowfully. "Never heard of such things!" he exclaimed indignantly. "Well, all I can say is, whoever carried you off and shut you up in that jungle cage did you a real service. If you had not been there we never would have found you and I'm here to tell you that from now on things are going to be different. You're discovered now and aboard the grandest ship afloat. You can forget all about being a King and start right in being a person and an able-bodied seaman. I for my part mean to see you have some fun or break a wing in the attempt."

"But would a King—"

"King! Never let me hear that terrible word again," shuddered Roger, sticking his head under his wing and then popping it comically out again. "From now on, you're plain Tandy and can do as you plain please so long as it does no harm to yourself or the ship. Understand? And tomorrow we'll start having fun, so be ready." Roger's promise sounded almost like a threat, but there was such a merry twinkle in his eye, Tandy began to feel interested. "You might even begin tonight," sniffed Roger, taking up the tray. "Just begin by thinking of something you want to do. Think about it hard and then DO it." Winking cheerfully over the empty plates, the Read Bird spread his wings and sailed through the port.

For several minutes Tandy lay where he was, turning Roger's last injunction over and over in his stiff, precise little mind. What DID he really want to do? At first he could think of nothing. Then suddenly he knew. Why, of course—he wanted to talk to Kobo and he just plain WOULD. There was a frosted cake left from his supper, and slipping it into his blouse, Tandy stepped quietly out on deck. The ship, with only a slight roll, was moving briskly through the water, white foam falling in lacy spray from her sides, the moon-white sails spread like giant wings

above his head. There was no one in sight, and almost holding his breath, Tandy tiptoed aft and leaned adventurously over the taffrail.

"Kobo—Yo KOBO!" he called huskily.

"Hello! I thought you'd be out soon." Swinging round and turning her vast smile upward, the hippopotamus gazed fondly at her young charge. "Are you comfortable? Did you have a good dinner?" she asked anxiously.



"Yes, and look what I saved for you!" As he spoke, Tandy glanced over his shoulder as if he were almost afraid to have anyone see him enjoying himself. "Open your mouth, Kobo!" he whispered eagerly. Without hesitation or question the hippopotamus stretched her jaws wide and Tandy with the first real thrill of his life flung the frosted cake into that immense pink cavern. As Kobo neatly caught and snapped her lips on the tempting morsel Tandy let out a faint cheer and began to think there might be something in Roger's suggestions after all. "I'll throw you lots of things tomorrow," he promised gaily. "Good night, Kobo. Good night, Kobo dear."

Humming a tuneless little song, the young King hurried almost cheerfully back to his cabin. Pausing in the doorway of his tidy quarters, he looked about complacently. What did he want to do next? There was no one to tell him to go to bed, so he just plain wouldn't. He'd sit up as late as he plain pleased. Rummaging through Peter's sea chest, which Ato had placed near his bunk, Tandy found a large tablet of stiff paper, a box of paints and some crayons. Settling himself cross-legged on his bunk, he began drawing, not pictures of the castles and courtiers of Ozamaland, but pictures of the queer jungle beasts and Leopard Men he had seen on Patrippany Island.

When Roger, on first watch, called out eight bells, he saw Tandy's light still burning, and flying down to investigate, found his new pupil fast asleep in the middle of his masterpieces. The whole bunk was covered with bright drawings and pictures and even to Roger's inexperienced eye they seemed excellently done. So, carefully the Read Bird stowed them in the sea chest, then, without bothering to waken or undress the little King, he covered him with a light blanket and went quietly from the cabin.

Chapter 9: Sea Legs for Tandy



"If what Roger tells us is so, little Sauce Box yonder has had a pretty dull life," said Ato as he and the Captain sat finishing their breakfast next morning. "Lucky for him we happened along and anyway, the hippopotamus will be good company, eh, Samuel? She seems downright sensible and jolly. Reminds me of Pigasus and I suppose she does belong to the pig family when you come to think of it."

"Well, she's a pretty big pig if she does," laughed Samuel Salt, swallowing his coffee with gusty relish. "Pretty big any way you take her. Personally, I like the animal, but the King and son of a King's son! PAH! Reminds me of Peter, he's so different, and the sooner we reach Ozamaland and set him ashore, the better. Meals in his own cabin. Hoh!"

"Oh, give him time," drawled Ato, helping himself a second time to fried potatoes. "If there's any good in the lad, a sea voyage will bring it out, and what chance has he had shut up in a tower for ten years and in a cage for five months? Though how an aunt managed to have him carried so far and why she left him with those savages in the jungle I can't get through my head at all."

"Maybe it was a gi-ant," whistled Roger, swooping down on Ato's plump shoulder and flapping his wings cheerfully. "How far do you figure it is to Ozamaland, Master Salt?"

"Well, that I couldn't just say," answered Samuel in a milder voice. Pushing back his chair, he stepped over to the map on the west wall. "Maybe a thousand leagues or so from Patrippany Island, maybe more, in a line east by sou'east from Ev. If that is so, we're bound to bump into it sometime, as I've set my course east by sou'east, and anyway it's all in the year's sailing." Samuel bent over with pride to examine the newest island discovery he had marked on the chart the evening before. "And when we do come to it," he announced firmly, "we'll trade this useless young one for some of those flying snakes and creeping birds, eh, Mates?"

"If we bring any more animals aboard we might as well set up an ark and be done with it," warned Ato, shaking his fork at the Captain. "By the way, how's Sally this morning?'

"Tiptopsails!" grinned Samuel. "She eats nothing but hot air and water and is no more trouble than a hair in a flea's whisker. I can carry her round in my pipe when I want company. Now there's a lass for you!"

"Well, I'll just see to Nikobo, for she's the girl for me," retorted Ato, rolling briskly out of his seat. "I saved all the potato peelings from last night, and that, with a dozen cans of peas, corn, carrots and beets, should stay her appetite till lunch time."

"Forty cans at one swallow," groaned Roger, clapping a claw to his head in mock dismay. "She'll eat us out of ship and home at this rate. Can't you think of something else, King dear? A nice wind pudding or a tub of sea soup sprinkled with faggots."

"Oh, go along with you," roared Ato, and picking up his precious coffee pot, he waddled cheerfully off to his storeroom.

The day was bright and breezy and the Crescent Moon going free, breasted the waves like a white-winged sea witch. It was SUCH a morning that even Tandy, peering inquiringly from his cabin, felt an uncontrollable impulse to slide down the deck. So he did, coming up smartly by Roger, who was perched on the rail.

"That's it! That's it! Now you're catching on," approved the Read Bird, hopping cheerfully from one foot to the other. "Now match your step to the sea's roll, sonny, get into her rhythm. You've got to breathe with the ship to carry your rations on a voyage. Watch the Captain, there, and do as he does," finished Roger as Samuel Salt left his cabin and came striding aft.

"Rather watch you!" exclaimed Tandy, who sensed the Captain's dislike. Uneasily he moved a little nearer the Read Bird.



"All right, come on then!" shouted Roger, heading recklessly for the foremast. "Ever climb a tree?" Tandy shook his head, looking with deep misgiving into the maze of sail and rigging above. But Roger was already aloft and beckoning for him to follow. "Not that way, Brainless!" scolded Roger anxiously as Tandy, gritting his teeth, made a desperate leap upward. "See those rope ladders by the

rail? Put your feet in the ratlins, boy, and come along hand over hand. It's easy as flying once you get the swing of it. There, that's better! Come on! Come on! Don't stop! Don't look down." So up—up and up the narrow rope ladders toiled Tandy, till Roger, growing impatient, seized his collar and helped him straddle the crosstree of the fore t'gallant mast. "Ahoy! And isn't this better than riding an elephant?" beamed Roger, winking a knowing eye. "Ahoy, this is fun and NO fooling." Seeing Tandy was too dizzy and breathless to talk for a moment, Roger cheerfully set himself to teach the young Ozamander a bit about ships and sailing. Soon Tandy was so interested he forgot the leap and plunge of the ship, the rattle and creak of the cordage and his own precarious perch in the foremast.

"The Crescent Moon," began Roger with an impressive jerk of his head, "is a square rigged three-masted sailing vessel. Normally 'twould take from sixty to eighty men in a crew to set and make sail and bring her about in a blow. But Samuel Salt has magic sail controls, so we three manage quite easily, and now that YOU are here and the handy hippopotamus below 'twill be easier still. The mast we're riding is the foremast. The mast second from the bow, as we call the front of the ship, is the mainmast, and the mast at the back or, as we salt water birds say, the stern of the boat, is the mizzenmast. And now for the sails." Roger took a deep breath. "Those below, beginning from the bottom up, are the course, the topsail, the topgallant sail, the royal and the sky sail. And don't forget!" Roger wagged his claw sternly. "Before each sail you must put the name of the mast to which it is attached. As, for instance, this ahead of us is the fore-topgallant sail. SEE? And everything to the left of the ship's center we say is on the port side and anything to the right is on the starboard."

"Then tell me why is the water on the port side bluer than the water on the starboard?" asked Tandy, who had been listening very solemnly as he tried to fix all of these strange sea terms in his head.

"Bravo!" cried Roger. "Right the first time, Mate. And the water is bluer on the port side of the vessel because it is saltier. The bluer the saltier," declared Roger, who, besides his first voyage with the Crescent Moon, had read all the sea books in Ato's library and was simply crammed with deep sea facts and information. "And what is more," he continued, pursing his bill mysteriously, "we're sailing in a magic circle never knowing what may pop up over the edge. A ship? An island? A hurricane? Or even a fabulous monster! That's what makes sea voyaging so glorious, and sailing so much fun!"

Tandy, staring at the empty circle of blue falling away from the ship on all sides, nodded dreamily. The White City—Patrippany Island—all his former life and existence seemed unreal and far away and he hoped in his heart of hearts the Crescent Moon would not reach his native shores for many a long gay day. As

Roger said, being a person was fun.

"M—mm!" Roger sniffed suddenly. "Wonder what Ato's cooking? Smells like taffy. I'll bet a ship's biscuit we're going to have a candy pull."

"A candy pull!" exclaimed Tandy, taking a furious sniff himself. "What is that?" As Roger started in to explain about candy pulls, a large green column shot up on the skyline, a column so surprising and shocking in appearance Tandy felt positively stunned.

"Oh, look! LOOK!" he screamed, grabbing Roger's wing. "There's something now. Oh, Roger, what fun! What terrible fun!"

"Fun?" Roger spun round like a weather cock in a gale. "Fun?" he repeated, stretching out his neck as far as it would go and a few inches besides. "Oh, my best bill and feathers. That's not fun—that's a SEA-Serpent. Help! Help! Deck ahoy! 'Hoy! 'Hoy! Below! King! Captain! Ato! SAMMY! SAMU-EL!" As if calling them not only by their titles but by their names would increase the number of the ship's officers and crew, Roger tugged wildly at Tandy's arm. "Below! Below! All hands below," shrilled the Read Bird. "Cover all ports and batten the hatches!"

Urged on by Roger, Tandy, still more interested than frightened, descended rapidly to the main deck. At Roger's cries, Ato had run out with a pan of bubbling molasses in one hand and his trusty bread knife in the other. Right behind him stood Samuel Salt, his eye pressed to his largest spyglass.

"Well, tar and tarry barrels!" exclaimed the Captain exultantly. "Why, this is a sea serpent second to none, the finest example of a marine ophidian I've ever met in all my voyages!"



"Oh, fiddlesticks!" blustered Ato, shaking him angrily by the arm. "Are you a Captain or a Collector? Quick, now, make up your mind before your ship is crunched down like a cracker and we're all swallowed up with the crumbs. Quick, Sammy! For the love of salt mackerel, DO something!" Squeezing himself between the cook and the Captain, Tandy saw that there were now three immense shiny curves showing above the water, and with scarcely a splash the tremendous monster was moving toward the ship. Then suddenly it was upon them, and its huge horrid unbelievable head came curling far over the bow of the Crescent Moon.

"Avast and belay! Avast and belay, you villain!" yelled Samuel Salt, dropping his spyglass and grasping his blunderbuss while Roger beat his wings together like castanets and screamed like a fire siren.

Tandy, rather frightened himself, and not knowing what else to do, fell flat on his stomach and pulling a pad from his blouse, began making a quick and frantic sketch of the dreadful sea beast. Its body was leagues long and yards through, the head was large as a whole elephant with a long curling silver tongue and darting green fangs. But it was the teeth that made even the stout heart of Ato hammer against his ribs. Each tooth of this singular sea serpent was a live white goblin brandishing a long spear. Leaning far out of the yawning mouth, they screamed, hissed and yelled at the defenseless company below. The next forward thrust of the monster brought its head curling right down among them. This so startled Tandy he could neither move nor scream. Samuel fired his blunderbuss so fast and furiously it sounded like a dozen guns, but it was Ato who really saved the day and his shipmates.



With calm and deadly precision, the ship's cook flung the pan of still bubbling molasses straight into the cavernous mouth. Screaming with surprise, pain and fury, the monster clamped its jaws together, and finding them stuck fast on the taffy, fell writhing back into the sea, dashing and slashing its head under water to ease the burn and setting the Crescent Moon to dancing like a cocklebur. But the taffy, hardened by contact with the cold water, stuck faster than ever, and unable to bite and scarcely able to breathe, the discomfited sea monster backed away from the ship and went slithering and thrashing away toward the skyline.

"Well, there goes our candy pull!" sighed Roger, falling in a limp heap to Ato's shoulder. "Nice work! Nice work, King dear. There's a certain touch about your fighting that is well nigh irresistible."

"Mains'ls and tops'ls! You certainly pulled a trick THAT time!" puffed Samuel Salt, picking up his spyglass to have a last look at his lovely specimen. "You saved us and the ship, that time, Mate. My bullets rattled off its hide like hailstones off a roof."

"Pooh! Just happened to have the taffy handy," answered Ato, looking rather regretfully into the empty pot. "Here, child, run back and tell Kobo everything's all right." The ship's cook pulled Tandy quickly to his feet. "Just listen to her squealing. The poor lass is probably frightened out of her skin." As Tandy started aft on a run, Ato picked up the sketch he had made of the monster. "Ahoy and what's this?" he panted. "What did I tell you, Sammy? Look, the boy's drawn as lively a picture of that varmint as you'd ever hope to paste in a scrap book. Here it is—tail, teeth and everything!"

"Mean to say he drew that while we were all standing here ready to perish and go down with the ship? Hah! That's what I call bravery in action!" exclaimed Samuel. "And goosewing my topsails! If the young lubber can draw like this he'll be a monstrous help to us, Mates. Why, I'll make him cabin boy and Royal Artist of the Expedition with extra rations and pay."

"Hurray! And I'll tell him," puffed Roger, spreading his wings gleefully. "Hi, King! Hi, Tandy! Ho, Tandy! You've been promoted from King to cabin boy and Royal Drawer of Animals and Islands and extry rations and pay!"

Nikobo was as pleased as Tandy at her little charge's rise to favor, and after they had both listened in rapt silence to Roger's news, Tandy told her how Ato had

routed the sea serpent. Meanwhile, Roger had carried all the sketches Tandy had made of the Leopard Men and Patrippany Island to the main cabin. Samuel's delight and enthusiasm at having such spirited and authentic records of the lost tribe and strange animals on Patrippany Island knew no bounds. He beamed on Tandy so kindly and approvingly next time they met, the little boy felt warm and jolly all the way down to his heels. Roger had already explained his new duties to him and when Ato sounded the gong for dinner Tandy was the first to answer. But when he started to pass the vegetables and wait on the table, the Captain gruffly pushed him into a chair.



"All equals here," roared Samuel, slapping him affectionately on the shoulder. "You've earned your place and your salt, sonny, and we'll all help ourselves and each other." Tilting back his chair and keeping time with his teacup, Samuel began to sing lustily:

"Blow high—blow low—
'Tis a salt sea life for me—
With a good ship's crew I'll sail the blue
With a good ship going free—eeeh—eeeh!
With a good ship going free!"
Almost before he knew it, Tandy was singing, too.

Chapter 10: The City of Bridges



The days that followed always seemed to Tandy the happiest he had known. He wondered now how he had ever endured his long, tedious, pent-up life in Ozamaland. There was so much to see and do on a ship, the hours were not half long enough. Being a full-fledged member of the crew, he took his turn on watch, his trick at the wheel, and had besides other duties on deck. After a bit of practice he could scramble aloft like a monkey and liked nothing so much as perching in the rigging looking far out to sea. The Read Bird had fastened a special rope to the mizzenmast so that Tandy could swing out and drop down on Nikobo's raft, and much of his free time was spent with the faithful hippopotamus.

Sea life agreed enormously with Nikobo, especially since Ato had solved the largest item of her diet. Noting the tangled mass of seaweed often floating by on the surface of the sea, the clever cook let down the ship's nets daily. The seaweed, crisp, tender and green, was dragged on deck where Roger and Tandy went carefully through it, removing all crabs, small fish and sea shells which seriously disagreed with the hippopotamus. A huge hamper full was lowered to her every evening and with this plentiful supply of green food, with the bread and delicious vegetable scraps Ato saved from the table, Nikobo fared better than she had on the Island. The largest tub on the boat served as a drinking cup and this Tandy kept full by playing down the hose from the deck, giving her a daily shower of fresh water at the same time. So, lacking nothing in interest or comfort, Nikobo enjoyed herself hugely and to the fullest extent.



On calm mornings, with the Crescent Moon hove to, all hands would go swimming. Nikobo loved to swim and to roll over and over like a mighty porpoise, even though the salt water made her eyes sting. Since Tandy had given Samuel the drawings of the Leopard Men, the ship's Captain could not do enough for his young cabin boy, and among other things had made a rope harness for Nikobo so Tandy could hang on when he perched upon her slippery back. At first he had been satisfied to ride Nikobo, but after several days he was splashing recklessly with the others and Samuel had taught him all the swimming strokes he knew and had Tandy diving over and under the hippopotamus in a way to make Roger scream with envy and approval.

Swimming was the only part of a sea voyage the Read Bird could not really enjoy, but he was always on hand to give advice, roosting on Nikobo's head so long as she stayed above water and taking hurriedly to his wings when she mischievously tried to dunk him. The hippopotamus made a really splendid raft when they tired of swimming, and Ato, who did not care for water sports so much as Samuel or Tandy, fished for hours from her back, his feet hooked through the ropes of her harness to keep him from falling into the sea. The only thing Tandy regretted was Nikobo's great size and that she could not come aboard ship and join them in the cabin. On cool evenings he and Ato and the Captain (Roger preferring to take first watch) would sit cozily round the fire listening to the stories Samuel told them of the days when he had been a pirate and roamed up and down the Nonestic, capturing the ships and treasure of all the powerful island monarchs. Tandy never tired of these thrilling sea battles nor

of watching Samuel Salt's pet fire lizard.

Sally was now so tame she would allow any one of them to pick her up. They had to be careful not to hold her against their clothing, however, for though Sally did not burn the fingers, she set fire to whatever she touched. Indeed, whenever they wanted a fire in the grate, they had only to place the Salamander on the kindlings beneath the logs and a cheery flame would blaze up instantly. It was in the fireplace Sally took most of her exercise, racing and scittering over the glowing logs or rolling happily in the red hot embers. But most of her time she spent curled up in Samuel Salt's pipe, and it was always a surprise to Tandy to see her comical head pop up over the edge of the bowl or hear her chirping and purring to herself from her cozy bed of tobacco leaves.

Some evenings, when Ato was trying out new recipes in the galley, Tandy and Samuel would descend to the hold to look over the plants from Patrippany Island, try to figure out the script on the piece of lava, and sort and arrange Samuel's shell collection. Every day after the nets were drawn up there were new specimens to classify and label. The drawing Tandy had made of the Sea Lion and all the pictures of the Leopard Men and beasts on Patrippany Island, Samuel had framed and hung above his shelves so that the hold was looking more and more like a scientific laboratory every day.

"Do you suppose we'll ever find anything large enough to put in those big cages and aquariums?" asked Tandy one night as he pasted a pink label on a fluted conch shell.

"Sure's eight bells!" murmured Samuel Salt comfortably. "No telling what'll turn up on a voyage like this. Personally I've set my heart on a roc's egg, but setting the heart on a roc's egg won't hatch one out, Ho, Ho! No, No! But, on the other hand, one never can tell and we've had a week of such fine and pleasant days, I look for something to happen any moment now, so you'd better put up your paste pot and turn in, my lad, so we'll all be ready for the morning."

"Well, what would you do with a roc's egg?" inquired Tandy, reluctantly clapping the top on his bottle of glue. "Aren't they terribly big and terribly scarce, Captain Salt?"

"Terribly!" admitted Samuel Salt, placing his tray of lamp shells back on their stand. "But a newly laid roc's egg is as rare as a mermaid's foot, and no larger than one small tar barrel. Now if we could just get a newly laid roc's egg aboard and find some way to preserve it, why, well and good, if we didn't find a way and it hatched before we landed, it could easily fly off with us and the ship, for THAT'S how big a bird a roc is. But I'll take a chance if I ever find a roc's egg and there's an island somewhere in these waters where rocs are known to nest. Rock Island it's called, and a roc's nest would be something to see, eh, Kinglet?"

"Please don't call me that," begged Tandy earnestly. "Roger says I don't have to be a King on this ship and I like not being a King."



"Ha! Ha! And I like you that way myself," roared Samuel, tossing Tandy suddenly to his shoulder. "Why, since you've stopped this King and son of a Kinging, you're a seaman after my own heart, and so long as the Crescent Moon's afloat you've a berth on her! Up with you! Up with you! Tomorrow's another day." Swinging gaily to the main deck, Samuel tumbled Tandy into his bunk and went striding aft to take in his main and mizzen topsails.

Next morning, while he and Ato were cutting up potatoes for Nikobo, Tandy was not surprised to hear a loud hail from above. Something had happened just as Samuel had predicted. Running out with a paring knife still in his hand, he saw a strange glittering mountainous island abaft the beam. It was still a goodish sea mile away, but with the glasses Ato generously pressed upon him Tandy made out the most curious bit of geography the eyes of a voyager had yet gazed on. There was not a piece of level ground on the island anywhere. Its high, glittering, needle-like peaks rose straight out of the sea with apparently no way of ascending or descending. Of clear crystal, reflecting every color of the rainbow, the beautiful island was almost too dazzling to look at as it lay shimmering and sparkling in the bright sunshine. As they sailed nearer, Tandy saw that a perfect maze of high and airy bridges ran like a gigantic spider web between the peaks. On these bridges all the island's life and activities seemed to take place. Quaint fluted cottages were built in the center, and along the perilous catwalks on either side raced the Mountaineers themselves, brandishing glittering poles and spears and halberds.

"Pikes on the peak! Pikes on the peak! Port your helm, Sammy," roared Ato. "Not too close! Not too near, Sam-u-el. How'd you like to be pinned to the mast with a spear or flattened on the deck with a boulder?"

"Ah, now, they're just excited!" answered Samuel Salt, squinting curiously up at the Bridgemen, but Nikobo, with her short legs resting on the top rail of her raft, squealed out a dolorous warning.

"Fighters! Fighters! These Pikers look savager than the Leopard Men. Best back away, Master Captain, while there's still time."

"Oh, look! LOOK! There's a ship on the mountain," cried Tandy, jerking Samuel's sleeve, "right there where that torrent comes down between the bridges, a three-master, larger than the Crescent Moon."

"Then it's a battle!" boomed Samuel, bringing his helm hard around. "Stand by to man the guns. 'Hoy, all hands, 'hoy!" While his shipmates sprang to attention, Samuel darted from mast to mast, touching the buttons on his sail controls.

"AYE DE AYE OH LAY!" The shrill unexpected cry came from the highest bridge on the island, and was immediately taken up and repeated by all the Pikemen on the lower bridges. It resulted in such a mad medley of yodels that Ato clapped both hands to his ears and Nikobo plunged her head in her drinking tub.

"Not only fighters, but singers!" grunted Ato, swinging the port gun into an upright position. "Beef, beans and barley bread! What a rumpus!" Tandy, who with Roger had charge of the other gun, could not help but admire the calm way Samuel Salt ignored the dreadful outcry from the bridges. Whether the pikes of the islanders could be flung down upon them was still a question, but as Tandy looked anxiously aloft, he saw the great white-sailed ship of the Mountain Men sweeping toward the torrent. It paused for a breathless instant on the top and then came rushing down upon them. They were right in the path of the descending vessel which would strike them with such force both ships would surely be demolished.

"I am a King's son and the son of a King's son," shuddered Tandy, gritting his teeth and waiting desperately for the order to fire. "I can bear anything."



"Not this! Not this!" chattered Roger, sliding wildly up and down the shiny cannon. "It will shiver your timbers—it will shiver all of our timbers. What in salt ails the Captain? Why doesn't he give the order to fire and pepper these rascals before they reach us? Oh, oh! Oh—hh!" But the only orders that came from the Captain were for Nikobo.

"Overboard, Lassie! Dive off! Quick, now, and swim for your life," bawled Samuel Salt, waving both arms frantically at the hippopotamus. As Nikobo with a frightened squeal let down the back rail of her pen and slid into the sea, Tandy felt a quiver and jerk through the whole length of the Crescent Moon. Glancing aloft, he saw a strange change in the sails. Where before they had been sturdy single stretches of canvas, they were now great swelling balloon sails, each a perfect air-filled sphere. As the ship from the mountain with an angry swish catapulted down from the torrent into the sea, the Crescent Moon rose buoyantly into the air, allowing the enemy craft to shoot harmlessly beneath her bow.

"What in Monday!" gasped Ato, flinging both arms round the cannon. "What in Monday are you up to now? How'd we do this? Stop! Stop! I'm no flier. No higher! No higher! Do you intend to impale us on yonder Peaks?" Samuel Salt, hanging desperately to the wheel, made no reply and as the ship, dipping and swaying, soared higher and higher the deafening yodels of the Bridgemen ceased abruptly.



"Wha—wha—where are you heading?" demanded Roger, spreading his wings in order to keep his balance on the sloping deck. "You never told us you had balloon sails, Master Salt."

"Ahoy, but we never needed them before!" panted Samuel. "Look sharp below, Roger. Tell me whether I'm over that lake or basin. Look sharp, mind you, or we'll come to grief yet."

"Aye, aye!" quavered the Read Bird, dropping obediently over the side. "It all looks sharp to me."

"Mean to say you're coming down in the middle of these pikes, peaks and bridges?" moaned Ato, holding his head with both hands. "Avast and belay, Mate, I signed up for a sea voyage and not a balloon ride. The altitude's got you, Sammy, that's what. You've air holes in your head. How do you expect the four of us to conquer this whole pesky peaky island? How could we even take half of them?"

"By surprise," announced Samuel Salt grimly. "We'll take them by surprise. Look, they're too surprised to even yodel. Fetch up the Oz flags, Tandy, and all hands aft for further orders."

"Aft and daft!" choked Ato, hanging on to the rail as he made his way toward the wheel. When Tandy came hurrying up from the hold, his arms full of Oz flags, the Crescent Moon hung directly over the glittering Island. Roger fluttered anxiously just below calling up hoarse information as to the size, possible depth and shape of the sparkling blue lake between the peaks.

Listening carefully to Roger's directions, Samuel deflated his balloon sails so skillfully the Crescent Moon came down lightly as a swan in the exact center of the Lake. Above and around the ship on all sides hung the glittering spans of a beautiful Bridge City, and in stunned silence and dismay the Bridgemen looked down on the flying ship and its curious crew.

"Ahoy and hail, Men of the Mountain!" challenged Samuel in a ringing voice. "You are now part and parcel of the great Kingdom of Oz, free as before to govern

yourselves, but from this day and henceforth on, an island possession and colony under the protection and puissant rule of her Majesty Queen Ozma of Oz!"

"OZ! Ozay Oz Oh Lay?" The cry came from the tallest and most splendid of the Islanders, who was standing with folded arms on the lacy span connecting the two highest peaks on the Mountain.

Chapter 11: The Prince of the Peaks



The cry, though loud, was no longer defiant, and Tandy with a little gasp of relief saw the Mountaineers on all the bridges bring their pikes to rest beside them and gaze aloft for further orders.

"I am Alberif, Prince of the Peaks," stated the Man on the Highest Bridge, looking coolly down at Samuel Salt. "But YOU—you who come in this flying ship to conquer the Island of Peakenspire, who are YOU?"

"Ato, the Eighth, King of the Octagon Isles, Sir Samuel Salt, Captain of the Crescent Moon and Royal Explorer of Oz, Tazander Tazah, King of Ozamaland, and myself a Royal Read Bird," shouted Roger before any of the others had time to speak for themselves.

The Prince of the Peaks, tall and splendid in his shining coat and breeches of silver cloth, his broad-brimmed hat with its quill and rosette of wild flowers, looked so much more impressive than anyone aboard the Crescent Moon, Tandy half expected him to laugh at Roger's boastful announcements. But instead, Alberif, leaning far out over his royal bridge, looked down at them long and seriously.

"Two Kings, a Royal Discoverer, a Flying Ship and a Read Bird! Hi de Aye de Oh!" whistled the handsome monarch, shaking his head ruefully. "No wonder we were captured. What then are your terms, Kings, Captain, Bird and Conquerors?"

"Not conquerors, COMRADES," called up Samuel Salt in his hearty voice. "Only by your own wish, agreement and consent shall ye come under the rule of Oz. If your Highness could but descend from yon Royal Bridge to this ship, everything can be arranged both peaceably and pleasantly."

"'Ware, Alberif! 'Ware, Alberif!" yodeled the Pikemen on the lower bridges. "Once

aboard that ship eeee-ip! We may never see you again eeeeee-yen!"

"Oh, nonsense!" blustered Samuel Salt impatiently. "I give you my word as a Pirate and a seaman no harm shall come to you on the Crescent Moon."

The Prince stood lost in thought for a moment, then tapping his long alpenstock sharply he issued a high yodeled command. From the bridgehead an immense basket swooped down. The Prince seated himself gravely in the basket and with three men manipulating the ropes made a swift and dizzy descent to the deck of the Crescent Moon.

While Samuel and Roger welcomed the tall and lordly Ruler of the Mountain Isle, Ato hurried off to the galley to prepare some suitable refreshments for his entertainment. Tandy, after Samuel had introduced him, began making careful sketches of the handsome Prince, of the lovely city of bridges and of the Pikemen, who still looked with suspicion and distrust upon the ship that had taken the place of their own.

"How about that basket?" whispered Roger, who had come out to help Ato in the galley. "How'd you like to be hoisted and lowered like a sail? And for salt's sake, King dear, dust the flour off your nose and put on your crown, or this fellow will think you're King of the Cookies and Doughnuts."

"Ha, ha! When he's tasted my plum cake he'll not think it, he'll know it!" puffed Ato, bustling happily from cupboard to cupboard. "Bring out the best tumblers and silver plates, fetch up a dozen bottles of my famous Sea-pop from the hold and we'll have this island in our pocket before you can say Oz Robinson!"

When Ato with one tray and Roger with another came out, they found the Captain and the Prince of the Peaks striding up and down the deck in the friendliest conversation imaginable. Matched in height and handsomeness, the two were discussing with lively interest everything from ships and governments to the strange limestone that formed the crystalline rocks of Alberif's island. Later, seated around the table with Tandy and Roger passing plum cake and Sea-pop, the Prince grew friendlier and more confidential still.

"We've never been conquered before," admitted his Majesty with a puzzled smile, "but really I find it both interesting and enjoyable."



"Just a matter of chance and luck," said Samuel Salt with a modest wave of his hand. "Had I not had balloon sails on the Crescent Moon, your ship would have cut us clean in two before we had time to put about."

"That is what I always planned would happen to an enemy craft," sighed Alberif. "Naturally our own ship, the Mountain Lass, would have been destroyed too, but we could easily have built another. That is what we'll have to do anyway, as we'll never be able to haul her up the torrent."

"Don't you do it," begged Samuel Salt, looking earnestly at the Mountain Monarch. "I'll send you a set of balloon sails as soon as I reach Elbow Island. The Red Jinn presented me with two sets and I'll be delighted to send you one. Once they're set, you can fly up as easily as we did and be ready for all and sundry, even US if we come again."

"Come and welcome!" beamed Alberif, looking in some surprise at Sally, who had just lifted her head above the rim of Samuel's pipe bowl. "But tell me, what am I to do now that I am conquered? Surely something is required of us?"

"Nothing! Nothing at all!" Samuel spoke earnestly and admiringly. "This island and your men are in fine shape and a great credit to you, so just go on as you are, but from this time forth you'll be in contact with the famous and most modern Fairyland in History, and if you are ever beset by enemies, you can call upon Oz for assistance or help. In time, fruit, foodstuffs, books and merchandise will arrive from Oz, and in return you may send back some of the sparkling crystals composing these mountains. You might even invite a band of settlers from Oz to come and live as your loyal subjects here."

"Gladly! Gladly!" agreed the Prince, his eyes sparkling at the prospect. "We have many uninhabited peaks and spires and could easily accommodate a thousand new bridge builders. Come with me, all of you, to Skytop Tower and we'll run up the flag of Oz and sign a pledge of allegiance to her Majesty Queen Ozma. AYE DE AYE OH LAY!" Running out on deck, Alberif joyously beckoned to the men who operated the traveling basket, inviting them all to enter. Ato, who had no intention of trusting his two hundred and fifty pounds to this strange conveyance, shook the Prince regretfully by the hand.

"I'll just watch it all from here," said the ship's cook firmly. "I've pie to cook, potatoes to peel and dinner to stir up for all hands and a hippopotamus, so, if you'll kindly excuse me—"

The Prince looked a little disappointed, but cheered up as Samuel, Roger and Tandy followed him into the basket.



"Haul away!" yelled Samuel Salt, winking at Ato, and to the shrill tune of a ringing round of yodels their curious elevator rose from the deck, spun merrily up to the Twin Peaks and highest bridge of Alberif's Mountain. Used as he was to the tall masts and lofty rigging of the Crescent Moon, Tandy felt sick and giddy as the basket swooped and swung upward. But it came down safely at last and at sight of the shining spans of the lacy city spread out below, and the glittering castle rising from the royal bridge, Tandy forgot all his uneasiness. With a little whistle of surprise and interest he followed Samuel and Alberif into the royal dwelling, while Roger flew off on a little exploring expedition of his own. Roger knew all about castles and was much more interested in the many windowed, fluted cottages of the yodelers.

Ato, watching from the deck of the Crescent Moon, presently saw the flag of Oz fluttering from the top turret of the Castle Tower and with a little sigh of relief and pride he gathered up the empty pop bottles and padded off to his galley. Soon Oz flags floated from the posts on all the bridgeheads, adding much to the gaiety and beauty of Alberif's city.

From the Royal Bridge Tandy and Samuel had a splendid view, and of his many experiences Tandy always remembered best the afternoon spent on Peakenspire. Alberif was a merry as well as an interesting host, explaining everything from the strange traveling baskets to the age-old customs and treasures of the Islanders. In the baskets the Islanders could travel from bridge to bridge and down to the sea itself when they wished to go fishing. There was little soil between the rocks, but such soil as there was, was so amazingly fertile, each family could raise all the fruit and vegetables required in one small window box. After long experimentation and culture, Alberif's ancestors had perfected two curious vines. On one vegetables grew in rapid rotation, potatoes following peas, corn following potatoes, carrots following corn, beets following carrots, cabbages, lima beans and spinach after the beets. The vine never withered or died and by cutting off the top every day the Islanders were assured of a continuous supply of fresh vegetables. The fruit vine was of the same variety, furnishing every known berry, fruit and melon. Each family was given two of

these vines and thus had very little worry about food supplies. Birds, something of a cross between wild ducks and chickens, made their nests in the craggy peaks, and with their eggs and a plentiful supply of fish and other sea food the Islanders fared splendidly.

The Bridgemen were tall, blue eyed, handsome and happy. Men and women alike wore short trousers and blouses of silver cloth and carried pikes that served both as weapons and alpenstocks. The bridges, while delicate as fine lace in construction, were supple and strong as steel. The material mined from the mountains themselves was like silver and crystal combined, a new strong and glittering metal, samples of which Samuel happily thrust into his pocket.

"Sounds like magic," said Tandy, who had been listening closely to Alberif's description of life on Peakenspire.

"It is magic of a kind," answered the Prince with a pleased little nod. "And the air here is so light and sparkling we never tire, grow old or have illness of any kind, so that my people are always light hearted and happy, spending most of their time in dancing and singing."

"I see," murmured Samuel Salt, "er—and hear," he added quickly as the wild, joyous cries of Alberif's yodelers made every window in the palace rattle. "I'll certainly make a note of all this and report Peakenspire Island to Queen Ozma as the most interesting discovery of the voyage."

"I am highly honored!" Alberif bowed stiffly. "Highly honored! HI dee Aye de OH—hhhhh!" Jumping into the air, the Prince of the Peaks kicked his heels together from sheer exuberance. "Wait," he told them cheerfully, "and I'll get you some fruit and vegetable vines to take back with you." Tandy and Samuel could not help grinning as Alberif rushed off. To tell the truth, there was something so light and exhilarating about the mountain air they found it difficult to walk calmly themselves. As the Prince returned Samuel felt a loud and uncontrollable yodel rising in his own throat, and seizing Tandy's arm, he bade Alberif a hasty and hearty adieu. Bidding him keep a sharp lookout for the airships from Oz, and loaded down with crystals and vines, the two explorers climbed into the basket and were swung swiftly down to the deck of the Crescent Moon. Roger, flying under his own power and yodeling like a native, arrived soon after.

With Oz flags flying from all bridges and the Mountaineers calling out rousing and melodious farewells, Samuel inflated his balloon sails and the ship soared gracefully aloft, circled the island three times and then dropped lightly down upon the surface of the sea. The Mountain Lass in charge of Alberif's husky crew lay just off shore and there she would have to stay till Samuel sent a set of balloon sails to lift her back to the Lake among the peaks.



Nikobo, who'd been swimming anxiously round and round, gave a bellow of relief as she spied the Crescent Moon.

"I thought you'd been captured and destroyed!" wheezed the hippopotamus, scrambling hastily aboard her raft. "Next time you fly off, take me aboard or give me a balloon sail too. I'm so full of salt water I'm perfectly pickled and somebody'll have to scrape the barnacles off my hide."

"But we've brought you a present," called Tandy, leaning far over the taffrail, "a vegetable vine that will keep you supplied with fresh vegetables as long as we're at sea. SEE! DEEEE Aye DEE OH!"

"Avast and balaydeeaye!" barked Samuel Salt grimly. "Let's get away from here. This is no way for able-bodied seamen to talk." Rushing from wheel to mast, he quickly set his sail. "Ahoy! Ahoy Dee Oy Dee OH!" he yodelled, then, very red in the face, he blew three shrill blasts on his fog horn, swung his ship about and the Crescent Moon, with a spanking breeze on her quarter, went skimming away toward the southern skyline.

Chapter 12: Fog

The evening had blown up raw and cold, and after carrying an old tarpaulin down to cover Nikobo, Tandy had come shivering back to the main cabin. Samuel Salt had close reefed his topsails and double reefed his courses, adjusted his mechanical steering gear, and now sat beside the fire examining a heap of the glittering crystals from Alberif's island.



"Just sketch Peakenspire Island on the chart, there where I've made the cross," he directed, looking up with an absent smile as the little boy came over to warm

himself at the cheerful blaze. "You're such a hand with a brush, even in so small a place you can give a good idea of the City of Bridges."

"And a good idea they are," murmured Ato, who was busy mending his fishing nets on the other side of the fireplace. "In every port we learn something new, eh, Mate? All mountains, no matter how high and peaked, could be lived on if they were properly bridged."

"True, quite true," agreed Samuel, squinting contentedly through his magnifying glass, while Tandy began sketching in the latest discovery on the sea chart. "I've written it all up in my journal and put down Peakenspire Island as able to accommodate a thousand settlers from Oz and as an especially good place for poets."

"Provided they are deaf," put in Ato, looking comically over his specs, "AYE DEE AYE DEE OH! While you fellows were aloft I got to yodeling so fast and furious I blew all the sauce pans off their hooks."

"Yes, that is one disadvantage," admitted Samuel, glancing approvingly at Tandy's picture of Alberif's Island, "but never mind, we don't have to live there, and think of the splendid specimens we've brought away, Mates!" Samuel ran his fingers lovingly through the heap of crystals and strands of metal Alberif had given him. "And those fruit and vegetable vines will provision us for the whole voyage."

"They're a great comfort to me, I assure you," muttered Ato, holding up his net to the light to see whether there were any more holes. "Now I know Kobo will never starve. I put a vegetable vine in a box on her raft and that leaves two for us, two for Ozma, and maybe Tandy would like to take the other two home with him?"

"Home?" Tandy swung round in positive dismay. "Oh—we're not near Ozamaland yet, are we, Captain?" His voice sounded so dismal Samuel Salt threw down his magnifying glass with a roar of merriment.

"Shiver my timbers, lad, one would think you did not wish to reach Ozamaland at all," he blustered teasingly. "What's the matter with that country of yours? You wouldn't keep an honest explorer from adding a creeping bird and a flying reptile to his collection, now would ye?"

"No! No! Of course not," answered Tandy quickly. "But perhaps it is farther away than you think, Master Salt, and perhaps the Greys have conquered the Whites and then I won't be King any more."



"What's this? What's this?" Ato lifted his nose like an old hound that has just scented a fox, for he loved a good story even better than he loved a good meal. "Who are the Greys and Whites, my lad? You never told us anything about this."

"There's really not much to tell," sighed Tandy, seating himself on a small stool before the fire. "In the first place, I suppose you know that the great continent of Tarara is divided into two large long countries? Ozamaland is on the East Coast and Amaland on the West Coast."

"Now I'll just make a note of that," said Samuel Salt, leaning over to pull his journal toward him.

"My country," went on Tandy slowly, "is made up largely of desert and jungle, best known for its white elephants and camels and the famous White City of Om, first King and ruler of the Kingdom. The Zamas are fierce and still wild tribesmen living in tents on the desert and in huts in the jungle. Only the thousand Nobles and their families who live in the White City have been taught to read and write and live under roofs. That is why the Kings of Ozamaland are so well guarded and never allowed out of the capital."

"Then I'd rather be a tribesman," sniffed Ato, letting his nets drop in a heap around his feet.

"But there's no choice," said Tandy thoughtfully. "The nine Ozamandarins who make the laws have decreed that the King shall remain in the White City."

"Well, what about these Whites and Greys?" asked Samuel Salt, pulling out his pipe and leaning down close to the fire so Sally could light it for him.

"My people, because they dress in white robes and turbans, are known as the Whites, and the Amas, the rough plainsmen who rove the long ranges of Amaland, are the Greys. The Amas care for nothing but their swift grey horses and often charge over the border to make war on my countrymen. Then the Whites, mounted on their white elephants and camels, have all they can do to hold their own."

"Aha, that's what I'd call a REAL battle!" exclaimed Ato, his eyes snapping with enthusiasm and interest. Then, noting Samuel's disapproving frown, he pursed

up his lips, shook his head and added quickly, "All very wild and disorderly, Tandy, my lad. Seems as if the Whites and Greys should manage their affairs more peaceably."

"Yes," said Tandy solemnly, "and I've often thought when I was grown, I'd ride over on my white elephant to visit the Greys and see why they are so unfriendly."

"A good idea, and if I were you, I wouldn't wait till I was grown. I'd do it as soon as I got back," advised Samuel Salt, taking a long pull at his pipe.

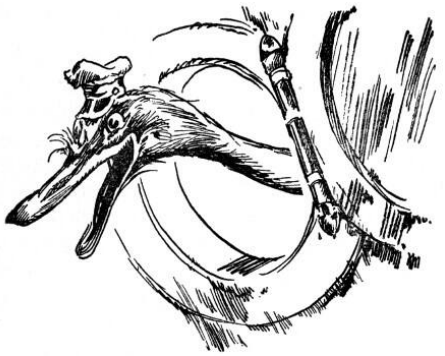
"And very probably get himself cut up and captured," shuddered Ato, shaking his head.

"Well, he's been both shut up and captured anyway, hasn't he?" said Samuel mildly. "Now which one of your aunts do you think had you carried off, Matey, and how many aunts do you have anyway?"

"Three," Tandy answered, counting them off solemnly on his fingers. "And they were all pretty and pleasant enough; but after the prophecy of the Old Man of the Jungle that I would be carried off by an aunt, they were all locked up in the castle dungeon and I was locked up in the Tower." And, resting his elbows on his knees, Tandy gazed soberly into the fire as if he might discover there the reason for his cruel abduction and imprisonment in the jungle.

"If I'd only been awake when I was carried away," he exclaimed impatiently.

"They probably gave you a sleeping potion," decided Ato, nodding his head portentously, "but it's such a longish distance, unless this aunt had wings or a flying eagle I'll never understand how she shipped you so far and so fast."



"Well, whoever it was did us a real service!" boomed Samuel Salt, twinkling his blue eyes affectionately at Tandy. "Even Peter was no better aboard a ship—eh, Mate?"

"A real artist and a seaman," agreed Ato, rolling cheerfully to his feet, "and when we reach Ozamaland I'll talk to these aunts like an Octagon uncle, and the Ozamandarins had better hold on to their turbans, too."

"But they wear square hats!" roared Tandy, laughing so hard he almost fell off the stool, for he just could not picture the fat King of the Octagon Isle berating the haughty judges of Ozamaland.

"What's the joke?" demanded Roger, flying in through the open port and making a straight line for the fire. "Brrr-rah! Wet weather, boys! Wet weather! Oh, what

a coldth and dampth and gloomth. Why, I'm moister than an oyster and clammier than a clam. How about a cup of hot chocolate for the Watch, Cook dear? Better see to your sail, Master Salt. Fog's thicker than bean soup out there."

"We'll all have some chocolate," said Ato as Samuel hurried out to see how dense the fog really was. Later, sitting by the stove sipping Ato's delicious hot chocolate, Tandy could not help comparing this cozy life aboard the Crescent Moon with his dull and lonely existence in the Royal City of his Fathers.

"I wish the Greys would capture the Whites," he thought vindictively, as he followed Roger across the slippery deck. "Then I'd never have to leave this ship." The kind-hearted Read Bird was carrying a pail of hot chocolate down to Nikobo on the raft. She could not get her great snout into the bucket, but she opened her enormous mouth and with one toss Roger poured the whole pail down her throat.



"That'll keep her warm till morning," chuckled Roger, flying back to join Tandy, "and now you'd better turn in, little fellow, for you're on morning watch and eight bells will be sounding before you know it!" All through his dreams about the Whites and Greys Tandy heard the raucous voice of the fog horn, and when he rolled sleepily out of his bunk to relieve Ato, the ship seemed to be hardly moving at all.

"Ahoy, Captain! Isn't a fog dangerous?" Tandy's voice seemed more hopeful than worried, and Samuel Salt, peering down at the little boy buttoned to his chin in Peter's old sou'easter, grinned approvingly.

"Just about as dangerous as a man-eating tiger," he answered cheerfully. "We're liable to ram a ship, run on the rocks, or scrape our bottom on a hidden reef or sand bar. These waters, as you know, being all unnavigated. But I've brought Sally along to keep my nose warm and throw a bit more light on the subject and we'll have to take our chance—eh, Matey? Just step aft and see if you can make out anything astern, will you, Tandy?"

Four o'clock, or rather eight bells, was always pretty dark and one had to depend more or less on the ship's lanterns, but this morning was the darkest Tandy had ever experienced. Clinging to the rail, he moved cautiously to the stern and gazed intently down into the gloom. Nothing an inch beyond his nose was visible and as for the raft and Nikobo, they might just as well not have been there.

"Kobo, Kobo, are you all right?" There was no answer to Tandy's call, but

presently a huge and resounding snore rolled upward and, greatly comforted, Tandy hurried back to the Captain. Samuel Salt was busy lighting extra lanterns and as he straightened up, a hollow boom, followed by a splintering crash, sent them both sprawling to the deck. Leaping to his feet and unmindful of the glass from the shattered lanterns, Samuel seized an unbroken one and ran furiously to the rail.

"Ship ahoy! Heave to! you blasted son of a cuttle-fish lubber! You've rammed us amidships, you blasted Billygoat. Where are your lights? Why didn't ye sound the horn?" His lantern, held far over the rail, made no impression at all on the choking fog. Jumping up and running after Samuel, Tandy strained his eyes for a glimpse of the ship that had hit them, for unmistakably to his ears came the scrape and rasp of wood on wood. Yes, surely it was a ship. But no answer to Samuel's hail came out of the fog, only the swish and murmur of the sea and the rattle of wind in the rigging. But all this creaking could not come from the Crescent Moon alone. There was a ship beyond them in the fog, but where, as Samuel had demanded, were her lights and crew? Wildly Tandy, hardly knowing what to think or do, continued to blink into the maddening darkness. Ato and Roger, wakened by the horrible jolt, now came hurrying out, each waving a lantern.

"Let go the anchor, Mates," ordered Samuel in a stern voice, "we're to grips with an enemy ship, so stand by for trouble. Further shortening his sail, Samuel waited tensely for the first move from their invisible foe.

"Might be pirates," he whispered out of the corner of his mouth to Tandy, who stood close beside him grasping the scimiter that had once been Peter's. "Jump the first man aboard."

"How about a long shot in their general direction?" wheezed Ato, who found the silence and suspense well nigh unbearable.

"No, it is not for us to start a fight," stated Samuel grimly. "But hah! Just let them start one! Fetch me my stilts, Roger, and be quick about it, too!"

"Stilts?" choked the Read Bird, dropping the blunderbuss with which he had armed, or rather winged, himself. "You'll never be trying those things again—they nearly shivered our timbers last time. Why take another chance?"

"My stilts!" repeated Samuel savagely, and Roger, who knew his duty as a sailor, flew without further argument to the hold. When Roger returned with a stilt in each claw, the Captain grasped one and moving silently as a cat over to the port rail, he thrust the long pole experimentally out into the fog. There was an instant thud, and Samuel himself got a severe jolt as the stilt struck against some firm and immovable object beyond. Convinced that it was an enemy ship, Samuel returned to the others and, drawn up in an anxious row, the four shipmates waited for the fog to lift or the first enemy seaman to leap aboard.



"I'll wager it's a derelict, or an abandoned vessel with no crew," breathed Ato, seating himself on a fire bucket to somewhat ease the long wait. The first hour Tandy stood fairly well, but the second seemed interminable. The flickering lanterns, the tense quiet, the choking fog and gentle roll of the ship all made him desperately drowsy, and, much to his later disgust, he must have finally fallen asleep. The next thing he remembered was the shrill squall of the Read Bird and the pleasant feel of the sun on his eyelids.

"The ship! The pirates! The fog!" thought Tandy, springing up wildly, but neither ship nor pirates met his astonished gaze. Abaft the beam lay a great whispering deep sea forest, its trees higher than the masts of the ship, springing directly out of the water and stretching their leafy branches to the sky. It was into one of these giant greenwoods the Crescent Moon had crashed in the fog. Samuel was staring at the sea forest with the rapt look of a scientist who has just made an unbelievable discovery, and Ato, with his elbows resting on the rail, was gazing dreamily in the same direction.

"'Hoy! Ahoy! Why, I never knew there were forests in the sea," exclaimed Tandy, running over to insinuate himself between the cook and the Captain.

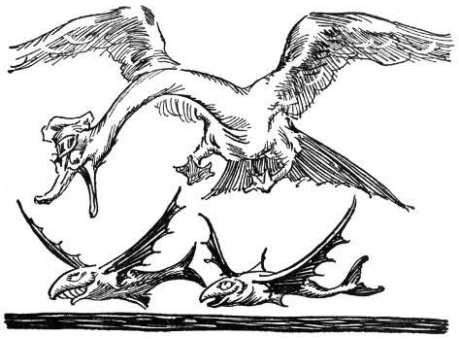
"There aren't! It's just plain impossible!" breathed Ato, moving over to make room for Tandy. "But, impossible or not, there she lies. And isn't it pretty?" he mused, resting more than half of his great weight on the rail.

"I suppose Sammy'll want to dig up a sea tree and bring it along," he leaned over to whisper mischievously in Tandy's ear. "And anyway, it's better than pirates."

"Look, look, there's fish in those trees," screamed Roger, bouncing up and down on Ato's plump shoulder. "How about some flying fish for breakfast, Cook dear?"

"Breakfast? Breakfast? Can it really be time for breakfast? Ho, hum! I thought I was still asleep and dreaming," grunted Ato, giving himself a little shake. "Well, forests or no forests, a man must eat, I suppose!" And still gazing delightedly over his shoulder, the ship's cook trod reluctantly toward the galley, while Tandy hurried into the cabin for his paints.

Chapter 13: The Sea Forest



Tandy had to call Samuel twice before he would come to breakfast and when he finally did sit down, he was so busy preparing to explore the sea forest he ate scarcely a bite.

"We'll take the jolly boat," he decided, making long notes in his journal between his sips of coffee, "the small nets and knives and baskets for cuttings and any specimens we may pick up and—"

"Why the jolly boat when we have a jolly sea-going hippopotamus?" inquired Roger, elevating one eyebrow. "A jolly hippopotamus, I might add, who runs under her own power and saves us the trouble of rowing!" Roger was much annoyed because he had failed to catch a flying fish before breakfast and instead of eating his hard-boiled eggs, kept winging over to the open port to glare at his finny rivals. Tandy, like the Captain, was too excited to eat, and even Ato downed his omelette and fresh strawberries from the Peakenspire fruit vine with rare speed and indifference.

"It's a lucky thing you're so enormous, Kobo," puffed the ship's cabin boy, dropping down on the raft a few minutes later. "Ato's got his crab nets and fishing lines, Samuel's bringing an aquarium, a couple of baskets and a box. And I have this pail, my paints and a cage in case Roger does manage to catch one of those flying fish." Kobo was staring fixedly at her vegetable vine as Tandy dropped down beside her, and now snapping off a whole bushel of beans, she turned round and, munching contentedly, surveyed the excited boy at her side.

"Whatever you have can be hung to my harness," she assured him, speaking a bit thickly through the beans. "But turn the point of that scimiter up instead of down; you wouldn't want to carve old Kobo, now would you? It will seem funny swimming through a forest, won't it, little King? The further we go on this voyage the queerer everything grows."

"But I like it queer," stated Tandy, climbing with a satisfied little sigh on Nikobo's broad back.



"I, too, find it most interesting and jolly," agreed the hippopotamus, fastening her eyes dreamily on the vegetable vine to see what was coming up next. "I thought I might be on short rations when I came on this voyage, Tandy, but I declare to goodness I've never had such a rich and varied diet in my life. You, too, look fine and strong and much happier than when we met in the jungle. But to get back to the fare—why, today I've had a basket of biscuits, a bushel of beans—"

"And that makes it Bean and Biscuit Day, I suppose," giggled Tandy, remembering Kobo's strange way of dividing up her week. "But look! Listen! Here they come!"

"Ahoy below, Hip Hip OPOTOMUS, AHOY!" roared Samuel Salt jovially from above. "All ready to cast off, my lass?"

"Aye, aye, sir!" grinned Kobo as Samuel and Ato came panting down the rope ladders to the raft. "Move over, Tandy, and make room for the Cook and the Captain!" It took nearly ten minutes to get all the gear and crew aboard and Nikobo looked like some curious deep sea monster when she finally shoved off. Two large baskets were slung from ropes across her back. The pail and bird cage slapped up and down on one hip, the aquarium on the other, and through her collar various fishing rods, nets and poles were stuck like quills on a porcupine.

"Now whatever you do, don't submerge," warned Samuel, holding his tin box for especially fragile specimens high above his chest to keep it dry. "Just slow and steady, m'lass, so we'll have time to observe and admire and make notes of any strange growths and creatures as we ride along."

"Creatures!" exclaimed Tandy, twisting round. He was perched on Nikobo's head, his paints held carefully in his lap. "Would there be any wild animals in a sea forest, Master Salt?"

"Sea Lions, likely," predicted Samuel, peering round eagerly as Nikobo paddled between two slippery barked sea trees into the murmuring forest itself. Except for the fact that the floor of this curious sea wood was the blue and restless sea, it might almost have been a forest ashore. The trees, tall, straight and stately, towered up toward the sky. Staring down into the clear green water, Tandy saw their trunks going down, down, down as far as he could see.

"Rooted in the very ocean bed," marveled Samuel Salt, touching one lovingly as they passed. "What splendid masts these would make, Mates! Avast and belay, Nikobo, I believe I'll just take a cutting or two."

"Ha, ha!" roared Ato, peering over Samuel's shoulder. "So now we're going to grow our own masts."

Samuel himself, leaning far out over Nikobo's back, severed three young shoots from the sea tree and popped them happily into the aquarium. Vines that were really of coral ringed the gigantic trunks like bracelets, and the leaves of the trees were long ribbons of green and silver that whipped and fluttered like banners in the morning breeze.

"What's that?" puzzled Ato as the hippopotamus made her way leisurely between the trees. "Looks like mushrooms, Sammy! Wait, I'll just pick me a few and see." Hooking his heels in Nikobo's harness, Ato began vigorously cutting from the trunk of one of the trees the colored fungus growths which sprouted in great profusion just above the water line. Nikobo bravely offered to sample some, and after waiting anxiously to see whether they would have any ill effects the ship's cook decided they were harmless and joyfully filled one of the baskets. The only specimens that really interested Ato were of the edible variety. While he was thus employed, Tandy, an experienced climber by now, scurried up to the top of one of the sea trees, breaking off several branches so Samuel could press the curious leaves in his album. High above his head Tandy could see Roger chasing angrily after a flying fish, muttering with anger at his unsuccessful efforts to overtake the nimble little sea bird. In our own southern waters there are large flying fish that leap out of the water of the gulf stream, but the flying fish in this Nonestic Sea Forest were small, and where most fish have gills wore strong transparent wings. Their claws, somewhat like a crab's, made it possible for them to perch jauntily in the branches of the sea trees, and these strange little fellows could swim and dive as well as fly. Pulling out his pad, Tandy made a lively sketch of one in the tree opposite, for it did look as if Roger would never succeed in catching one.

All morning Nikobo paddled calmly through the dreamy sea forest; Samuel making notes, Tandy sketches, and Ato catching in his long-handled nets plump little fish and crabs, and filling another basket with the small delicious clams that clung like barnacles to the slippery bark of the sea trees. In the shadowy center of the forest where the trees pressed closer together and great flat rocks stuck their heads out of the water, the explorers came upon several fierce sea lions. They were not smooth and shiny like the seals of our own oceans, but yellow and tawny with long yellow tusks, tufted tails and scaly manes. Their front legs ended in sharp claws, their back legs were shorter and their feet were webbed for swimming. Only the fact that Nikobo was larger and more frightening to the

sea lions than they were to her saved the party from a savage attack by these malicious-looking monsters. As it was, they retired sullenly into the deeper shadows, snarling and roaring defiance as they backed away, but not before Tandy had made an effective sketch of the whole group.

"'Tis a lucky thing for us that you're along!" grunted Ato, drawing his feet up out of the water and looking with grim disfavor after the snarling sea lions. "Likely as not, if you had not made that picture, Samuel would have tried to drag one along by its tail, regardless of our feelings or safety."

"A wild maned sea lion would be a valuable addition to any collection," sighed Samuel Salt, shaking his head regretfully. "But then—" he grinned in his sudden pleasant way, "not much of a mascot at that."



The only other happening of note was Roger's capture of a monkey fish. Unable to overtake a flying fish, the Read Bird had pounced on this small combination of a land and water beast as it sat quietly sunning itself on the limb of a tree. Screaming and chattering, he bore it proudly down to the Captain, and Samuel was so pleased with the curious little creature that when Nikobo suggested going back he made no serious objection. And as the hippopotamus, rather weary from her long swim, headed thankfully back for the ship Tandy and Samuel made ambitious plans for the monkey fish's care and comfort.

Thrusting it into Tandy's bird cage, Samuel regarded it with increasing enthusiasm and interest. "I'll rig up a wooden tree in one of the aquariums, set the aquarium in one of the large cages so it'll have both air and water, and call it 'Roger' after its discoverer," beamed the former Pirate with a wink at Tandy.

"Don't you dare call that monkey fish after me," screeched the Read Bird, flying round to have another look at his strange prize. "Why, it's uglier than a blue monkey, looks like a regular goblin, if you ask me." And to tell the truth, the monkey fish was even uglier than a goblin, shaped like a monkey but scaled all over, and with unpleasant goggly eyes and three short spikes sticking out of its forehead.

"It does look like a goblin," agreed Tandy with an amused sniff. "But let's call it Mo-fi, which is short for fish and monkey."

"Tip tops'ls!" approved Samuel Salt, taking out his note book. "Wonder what it

eats?"

"Great grandmothers, what would it eat?" moaned Ato, looking blankly at Samuel. "Another mouth to feed and listen to! Dear, Dear and DEAR!"

"Oh, give it a box of animal crackers," put in Roger carelessly.

"No, I brought along some gold fish food for just such an emergency as this," declared Samuel, making a little flourish with his pencil as he wrote busily in his journal. "Gold fish food will be splendid for a monkey fish."

"Well, don't forget the bananas—for remember it's a monkey, too," chirped Roger, settling on the Captain's shoulder to read what he had written. So, laughing and joking and in the highest good humor the exploring party returned to the Crescent Moon.

What with planting the slips from the sea tree, settling Mo-fi in his aquarium cage, pressing the leaves from the marine forest, and making copies and further notes about the sea lions in his journal, Samuel did not get his ship under way till late afternoon.

Ramming into the sea tree, beyond scraping off some paint, had done little damage, so singing boisterously, Samuel finally heaved up his anchor. And soon, with Ato stirring up a huge clam chowder, Tandy painting the sea forest on the chart and Roger scouring the hold for Mo-fi's fish food, the Crescent Moon again dipped adventurously into the southeast swell.

Chapter 14: The Sea Unicorn!



"Ahoy! and how goes it with the able-bodied seaman?" called Roger, swooping down from the foremast. Tandy, polishing the brass trim on the binnacle, looked up with a welcoming grin.

"Tip topsails!" he answered, pausing a minute to stare off toward the skyline to see whether any islands or sea serpents were visible.

"And look at that muscle, now," marveled Roger, touching Tandy's arm admiringly with his claw. "You're twice the lad you were, Mate, and I'll wager my last feather you can lay any lubber by the heels. If anyone gets fresh-water ashore, remember you're a salt sea-going sailor and you just take a poke at him. That's my advice without any charge or obligation. But then again, a chap that's a King, the Royal Artist of an exploring expedition, with a sea forest named after him, might not need to take any advice at all," added Roger with a long and

knowing wink.

"But I like you to tell me things," said Tandy, looking earnestly up at the Read Bird. "You make everything seem so interesting and jolly." With a secret smile, for Tandy was thinking how much he would enjoy taking a poke at Didjabo, the Chief Ozamandarin, the little boy went on with his polishing. If Didjabo said anything further about shutting him up in the Tower, he just plain would take a poke at him. But saying nothing of all this to Roger, he called up cheerfully, "How's Mo-fi? Has he stopped scolding and begun to eat?"

Roger, who was running races with himself up and down the taffrail, stopped short and held up his claw. "Everything I give him," he told Tandy solemnly. "And I declare to badness he's getting to know me, Mate. He only pulled out three feathers instead of a fistful when I gave him breakfast just now. Before long he'll be so tame he'll be riding around on your shoulder."

"Not MY shoulder," laughed Tandy, waving his bottle of polish at the Read Bird. "Goodness, I believe you're growing fond of that monkey fish, Roger."

"Well, why not?" retorted the Read Bird, puffing up his chest. "Ato has me, the Captain has Sally, you have Kobo, so why shouldn't I have a little pet if I want one?"

The monkey fish seemed such a strange prickly sort of pet, Tandy could hardly keep his face straight, but seeing Roger was quite in earnest, he tactfully changed the subject. "Do you suppose we'll make any new discoveries today?" he asked, screwing the cap on the bottle of polish. "Any as important as the sea forest, I mean?"

"Why not call it by its proper name?" teased Roger, scratching his head with his left claw. "And I think it most unlikely we'll strike anything as curious and important as Tazander Forest. Two discoveries like that just couldn't happen two days running. Still, I'll just fly up to the main truck and have a look around."

"Main truck?" Tandy wrinkled up his brows. "I thought I knew all the parts of this ship by now. You never told me about the main truck, Roger."

"Just the top of the main mast, Brainless." Giving Tandy an affectionate little shove, Roger soared into the rigging and Tandy went joyfully off to have another look at the forest Samuel had insisted on naming after him. He had taken great pains with the painting and printing when he sketched it on the map, and now with a sigh of complete satisfaction he stood regarding the sea chart. Then, suddenly remembering he had promised to water Samuel Salt's plants, he jog trotted contentedly down to the hold.

The tumbleweeds in their small red pots grew so rapidly Samuel had to cut them back every day. These Tandy watered very sparingly, snapping his fingers at Mo-

fi, who was gravely chinning himself on a branch of his artificial tree. The slips of the sea trees in their covered aquarium required no attention at all. Ato had planted all the vegetable and fruit vines from Peakenspire on the rail outside the galley, so that left only the creeping vines from Patrippany Island to care for. He had just picked up one of the small potted creepers when a sharp rap tap under his toes made Tandy leap straight up in the air. Someone was knocking on the bottom of the boat.



"Ato! Captain! ROGER!" shrilled the little boy, scurrying up from the hold faster than he had ever done before.

"Su—su—SOMEBODY'S knocking on the bottom of the boat." Before he could explain, or tell them anything further, a perfectly terrific knock from below made the Crescent Moon shiver from end to end. Samuel and Ato, leaning over the port rail, turned round so suddenly they bumped their heads smartly together. Next with a scrape, screech and splintering of timber, a giant white horn came tearing up through the decks.

"Whale! Whale!" croaked Roger, falling off the main truck and coasting crazily down to the deck. "Wha—what ever'n ever's that?" he quavered, pointing a trembling claw at the rigid white column between the main and mizzenmasts. Samuel did not even try to explain, for at that instant the ship began to rise, to fall, to lash and plunge both up and down and east and west. Hooking his arms through the rail, Tandy blinked, gasped and shudderingly waited for the Crescent Moon to fly asunder.

"Narwhal, Mates!" panted Samuel Salt, throwing himself bodily upon the wheel. "Horn like a—uni—corn—branch of the Odontocetes and—"

"Oh—you—don't say—it—is!" chattered Ato, who was lying on his stomach bouncing up and down like a ball at each frightful lunge of the monstrous fish. "Well, it's spiked us—is that a horn or a ship's mast? Oh woe, oh! What'n salt'll we do now?"

Samuel had not the heart to answer, for he had all he could do to hang on to the wheel as the ship, like a wounded animal, reared and plunged, thrashing the sea to a fury of foam and spray. Nikobo, diving precipitously off her raft, began to squeal in high and low hippopotamy, making brave but ineffective lunges at the lashing giant beneath the ship.

"Su—suppose it su—submerges?" wailed Ato, who had managed at last to seize

a rope from the end of which he banged and slammed continuously up and down against the deck. "Oh, my stars! Oh, my spars! Oh, my beams and—" Tandy never heard Ato's last anguished cry, for at that moment a savage shake of the Narwhal's head sent him flying into the sea. Coming up coughing and choking, Tandy instinctively began to swim and for the first time became aware of the creeping vine he still had clutched tightly in one hand. And in that instant and in that whirl of danger, disaster and destruction, the little boy suddenly grew calm and purposeful. This vine—well, why would this powerful vine from Patrippany Island not work as well under water as on land? The chances were that it would. Swimming boldly back to the ship, Tandy took a quick dive, hurling the vine pot and all in the general direction of the Narwhal. No sooner had the vine touched the water than it began to open, creep and grow and, spraying out a hundred strong tentacles, it seized and bound the plunging monster in a secure and inescapable cradle of leafy wood.

Gasping and sputtering, but with his heart pounding with joy to think he had really saved Samuel's beautiful ship, Tandy rose to the surface. Nikobo, letting off shrill blasts of anger and fright, came paddling anxiously toward him. But giving the hippopotamus a reassuring wave, Tandy seized the end of a rope ladder and pulled himself up to the deck.

Samuel, though battered and bruised, still clung to the wheel, and Ato, almost pounded to a jelly, had rolled into the scuppers where Roger was fanning him vigorously with a butter paddle. The Read Bird, having wings, could have left the ship at any time, but had clung bravely to his post, preferring to go down with the ship and his shipmates. Now all three of them stared in dazed silence at Tandy as he climbed back over the rail, for in the terrible confusion and excitement no one had seen him go overboard.

"Tandy! Tandy! Where've you been?" With outstretched arms Samuel Salt rushed groggily forward. "Shiver my liver! Why's everything so quiet? Could it be that you single-handed have destroyed that ship-shaking menace?"

"I don't think he's destroyed, Master Salt," answered Tandy, limping happily to meet the Captain, "but he's caught fast as a lobster in a lobster pot and can't move at all."

"Caught?" rasped Samuel, running across the deck to peer over the rail.

"By the creeping vine," explained Tandy, and in short, breathless sentences he told them all that had happened after he was flung into the sea.

"Well, bagpipe my mizzenmain sails!" gasped Samuel Salt, staring at Tandy with round eyes. "This is the strangest and happiest day of my life. You've saved the ship and the whole expedition, my boy, and all we have to do now is cut loose from this cavorting unicorn of the sea and sail off with the largest ivory horn in

captivity. An ivory mast, blast my buckles! Wait till the Ozites see us sailing up the Winkie River with four masts instead of three! Ahoy, below! Ahoy, Kobo! Can you dive with me beneath this ship?"

"Dive and stay under as long as you can," vowed the hippopotamus, shaking the water out of her eyes and looking cheerily up at the Captain. "You see, I was right about those creeping vines, now wasn't I?" Nikobo, having done a little investigating on her own account, was well nigh ready to burst with pride at Tandy's quick action and the way in which the vines had overcome their gigantic foe.

"RIGHT!" boomed Samuel Salt, hurrying off for his oxygen helmet and powerful diamond toothed saw. Ato was too bruised and exhausted to rise, but Tandy and Roger, perching on the ship's rail, watched Samuel in his queer diver's helmet climb down the rope ladder and clamber up on the hippopotamus. Next minute Nikobo had disappeared under the surface and presently from the slight shiver and shake of the boat they knew that Samuel was determinedly at work cutting them loose. Fortunately there was room between the ship's bottom and the whale's head for Nikobo to swim about, and so splintering sharp was Samuel's saw that in less than five minutes he had cut off the great column of ivory level with the ship's bottom, carefully calking the edges with material he had brought down. In its tight and live wood crate the Narwhal could not stir an inch, and, while the cutting of its horn was not painful, it blubbered and spouted so terrifically that Samuel and Nikobo heaved tremendous sighs of relief when the dangerous operation was accomplished.



Backing off a few paces, Nikobo began butting the crated sea beast with her head till she had driven it out from beneath the boat. Roger and Tandy, with little shrieks of wonder and excitement, saw the crated fish like some queer and monstrous mummy rise to the surface and go floating sullenly away toward the east. Now that they had a full view of the Narwhal they saw that it was three times the length of the Crescent Moon.

"A great wonder Sammy didn't tie it to the ship and tow it along," sighed Ato, who had at last got to his feet and draped himself weakly over the rail. "Some fishin'—eh, Mates?"

"But look at the beautiful mast we have!" cried Tandy, waving to Nikobo and the Captain as they came cheerfully alongside.

"Huh! you're as bad as Sammy," grunted Ato, rubbing his bruises sorrowfully.

"And of course a mast was just what we were needing! Whale of a mast! Mast of a whale! HUH!"

Chapter 15: The Collector Is Collected



"What are you going to call this one?" inquired Tandy next morning as he and Samuel squinted thoughtfully up at the gleaming ivory column between the main and mizzenmasts.

"Might call it the whalemast," said Samuel, rubbing his chin reflectively. "And it's a lucky thing for us the point was sharp enough to cut through the decks without damaging the ship. At any rate, it's given us the biggest fish story a voyager ever had to relate. Tossed on the horn of a Narwhal! And the best part of the whole story is that we have the proof right along with us. Hah! Right here!" Samuel in his glee and exuberance gave the whalemast a hearty slap.

"Kobo says that vine won't unwind for a couple of days, but anyway it'll be a fine rest for the whale floating around without having to swim. And I expect it can grow another horn?"

"I expect so," agreed Samuel, winking down at Sally, who was standing on her head in the bowl of his pipe. "If this little Lady would just talk, she could give us a heap of valuable information about life in Lavaland, Mate."

"Roger's taught Mo-fi to say 'Ship ahoy!'" observed Tandy, strolling over to the rail to watch the white foam sweep past the ship's side. "And your sea tree sprays have grown an inch since yesterday, Captain."



"They have?" Samuel blew three rings from his pipe, then walked aft to glance at the compass. "Well, my boy, if the rest of the voyage is as good as the beginning, we'll sail home loaded to the gun'ls." The mention of home always made Tandy wince, for the Crescent Moon was the first real home he had known. To think that he would be put ashore in Ozamaland while Samuel's ship would continue its adventurous voyage of discovery without him, was a fact almost too terrible to consider.

"Maybe we'll never come to Ozamaland at all," mused Tandy as he climbed into the rigging to join Roger. "Maybe the Captain's reckoning is wrong and Ozamaland is to the north instead of the south." Vastly comforted by this idea, Tandy swung nimbly to the crosstree on the fore t'gallant mast. Roger was staring intently through Ato's telescope and as Tandy squirmed along to a position beside him, the Read Bird let out a shrill squall, all his head feathers standing straight on end.

"What do you see? What is it?" cried the little King, shading his eyes with his hands and staring in all directions. "I can't see a thing."

"Take the glasses," urged Roger, handing them over with a frightened gulp. "Take the glasses and then tell me it isn't so." Tandy, scarcely knowing what to expect, screwed his eye close to the telescope, then he, too, gave a shriek of consternation.

"Why—it's a big HOLE, a HOLE in the sea!" he stuttered, lowering the glasses and staring at the Read Bird in blank dismay.

"Exactly!" croaked the Read Bird, "and whoever heard of such a thing? A hole in the ground, certainly, but a hole in the sea, why that's just plain past believing. Ahoy, DECK AHOY!" Wagging his head, Roger lifted his voice in a long warning wail. "Heave to, Master Salt! Heave to! Danger on the bow!"

Somewhat surprised, but without stopping to question Roger, in whom he had the utmost confidence, Samuel hove his vessel to. And not a moment too soon, for barely a ship's length away yawned an immense and unexplainable hole in

the sea. Round its edges the waves frothed, tossed and bubbled, making no impression on that quiet curious vacuum of air. Crowding into the bow, the ship's company stared down in complete wonder and mystification.

"Now, goosewing my topsails, this'll bear looking into!" puffed Samuel, breaking the silence at last.

"Now, now, NOW!" Ato snatched wildly at Samuel's coat tails as he raced aft bellowing loudly for Kobo to come alongside. "You'll not go a step off this boat. We can sail round this air hole and no damage done, but as for looking into it! Help, HELP! Avast and belay and I'll knock eight bells out of anyone who leaves this ship!" Seizing an iron belaying pin, Ato made a desperate rush after Samuel Salt, and failing to catch him before he slid down the cable to Kobo's raft, he grabbed Tandy firmly and angrily by the seat of the pants. "Not a step!" panted the ship's cook savagely. "Not a step! Roger! Roger! Come back here this instant." But Roger, with a screech of defiance, had already flown after Samuel. Tandy, pinned against the rail by Ato's two hundred and fifty pounds, was forced to watch Nikobo, with Roger and Samuel on her back, moving cautiously toward the edge of the air hole. Over his shoulder Samuel had a huge coil of rope the end of which he had attached to the capstan of the boat before he dropped over the side.

"Oh! Oh! and OH!" wheezed the ship's cook, "If Sammy goes down that cavern we're as good as lost. No one to navigate, to up sail or down sail or lay to in a storm. My, My and MYland!"

"Well, there he goes!" cried Tandy as Samuel flung the rope down into the sea hole. "Don't worry, Ato, he's always come back before, hasn't he? Let me go! Let me go, I tell you!" With a sudden jerk Tandy tore out of Ato's grasp, climbed up on the rail and dove into the sea. Swimming rapidly toward the hippopotamus, he climbed on her back and with Roger fluttering in excited circles overhead Nikobo swam as close to the edge of the sea hole as she dared, watching in terrified fascination as Samuel calmly lowered himself into the clouded blue depths. With mingled feelings of interest and alarm, Tandy saw the Royal Explorer of Oz go down lower and lower and finally disappear altogether into the deep blue air below. Now not a glimpse of Samuel was visible and not a sound came up to reassure them that he was still there.

"I'll just fly down and see what's up," quavered Roger, and in spite of the loud shouts and threats of Ato on the Crescent Moon, the Read Bird spread his wings and coasted slowly and bravely into the immense air shaft. Nikobo, now as alarmed as the ship's cook, began swimming frantically round the edge of the misty chasm, letting out piercing blasts that sounded like nothing so much as a ferry boat whistle. Tandy himself felt uneasy and frightened and Ato, unable to bear the suspense any longer, climbed over the side and came swimming out to join them. After an endless fifteen minutes, during which dreadful fear and premonition gripped the watchers, the head of the Read Bird popped mournfully into view.



"Is he all right? Where's Sammy? What in soup's he doing? What'd you find out?" gasped Ato, reaching out to clutch Roger by the wing. Roger, limp and bedraggled, with all the stiffness out of his feathers, said nothing for a whole minute. Then, beating his wings together, he began to scream out hoarsely, "The Captain's caught! The Collector's collected. They have Master Salt forty fathom below. They've got him shut up, I mean down at the bottom of the sea like a gold fish in a bowl, only he's in a big bowl of air. They're poking little fish and crabs through a trap door in the air shaft and I cannot break or even make a dent in the transparent slide they've shot across the air hole to shut him off from us. And oh, my bill and feathers! Every time they open the trap door to shove things in to him, water rushes into the vacuum. He's standing in water to his knees now and unless we can break a hole in that lid the Captain's done for—done for, do you hear?"

"They?" asked Tandy while Nikobo's eyes almost popped out of her head, "Who do you mean?"

"Oh, oh, don't ASK me!" choked the poor Read Bird. "They're not fish and they're not men. They're about the size of Tandy, here, sort of stiff and jellied and perfectly transparent. On a shell hanging outside of one of their caves it said 'Seeweegia.'"

"Seeweegia!" moaned Ato, clutching his head in both hands. "Let me see! Let me see! What's to be done, boys? Now quick! What's to be done?"

"Have Roger fetch the saw we used on the whale's horn," gurgled Nikobo.

"And I'll climb down and saw a hole in that slide," cried Tandy eagerly.

"No, I'll climb down," said Ato firmly. "I've known Sammy the longest and if he's going to come to a watery end I might as well end with him."

Leaving the two arguing, Roger flashed back to the ship, returning in almost no time with the scintillating and powerful saw. Tandy had meanwhile convinced Ato that he could climb down the rope faster, being so much lighter, and now, with tears in their eyes, Nikobo and the ship's cook saw Tandy and Roger disappear into the air shaft.



Tandy let himself down carefully hand over hand, Roger keeping abreast of him with the saw. To slide rapidly to the bottom would have been quicker, but the resulting blisters would make it difficult to use the saw. Forty fathoms, nearly two hundred and forty feet, is a long way to go hand over hand on a rope, and before he reached the glass-like slide, Tandy's palms stung and his shoulders ached and burned from the strain. But at last he was down, and dropping to his hands and knees with Roger mourning and muttering beside him, Tandy peered fearfully through the glassy substance.

For a moment everything was a green and misty blur, but gradually the figure of Samuel Salt standing sturdily in the middle of the air bowl became visible. Although waist high in sea water, and surrounded by loathsome sea creatures and crabs the Seeweegians had tossed in for him to eat, Samuel was making slow and interested entries in his journal. Pressed against the sides of his strange aquarium, Tandy could see the round, square and triangular faces of the jellyfish men and women. Brilliantly colored vines and seaweed waved and tossed in the current, the floor of the ocean was covered with bright shells, polished stones and all manner of sparkling deep sea jewels. Had Tandy not been so worried about Samuel Salt he would have liked nothing better than sketching this strange and beautiful under sea Kingdom with the Seeweegians flopping and swimming busily in and out of their grottos and caves, or disporting themselves in the sea weed forests. But as it was, his only thought was of quickly freeing the Captain of the Crescent Moon from his curious prison.

"Look, they've put up a sign," hissed Roger, handing over the saw. Looking in the direction indicated by Roger, Tandy saw an immense shell on which long wisps of sea weed had been arranged to form the words:



Come see the curious high air manster.
Admission, 1 pearl, 5 corals and a clam!
The sight of this sign swinging from a small sea tree close to Samuel's air bowl sent a wave of rage up Tandy's back. Rubbing his palms briskly together, the little boy seized the saw and struck it with all his might against the unyielding surface of the slide. The noise attracted Samuel's attention, and looking up he began waving his arms, yelling out wild orders and commands. Not being able to hear any of them and being quite sure Samuel was telling them to leave the air shaft before the Seeweegians shot another slide above their heads and caught them, too, Tandy proceeded grimly with his task. Roger helped, scraping away with both claws and bill. For five desperate minutes they worked without success, then a tiny crack split the slide from edge to edge. Wedging the saw into the narrow opening, Tandy began sawing away like a little wild man, for a fresh batch of snails and crabs tossed in to Samuel had let in another rush of sea water. Immersed to his chin, Samuel started to swim round and round, dodging the end of the saw as it flashed up and down above his head.

"Oh!" gasped Tandy, stopping a moment to blow on his fingers. "I'll never be able to make this opening large enough. Look, look, Roger, they're opening that trap door again. Oh, Oh! I can't bear it!"

"Help! Help!" yelled the Read Bird, looking despairingly up the empty air shaft. "Help, for the love of sea salt and sailor men!" His cry, increased by the curious nature of the compressed air in the air shaft, increased a hundredfold and fell with a hideous roar upon the anguished ears of Ato and Nikobo. Almost instinctively and without thought of her own safety, or Ato's, or the dire consequences, the hippopotamus jumped bodily into the sea hole. Roger, still glaring upward, had a quick flash of an immense falling object. Realizing at once what had happened, the Read Bird had just time to snatch Tandy and drag him to the opposite side of the slide before Nikobo landed—broke through the thick glass, plunged into Samuel's aquarium and shot out through the side into a group of horrified Seeweegians. Now do not suppose for an instant that Tandy, Roger or Samuel himself saw all this happen. Indeed, after Nikobo struck the slide, none of them remembered a thing, for the ocean, rushing in through the puncture the hippopotamus had made in the vacuum, rose like a tidal wave, carrying them tumultuously along.

Nikobo came up at a little distance from the others, with Ato, completely wrapped and entangled in seaweed, clinging tenaciously to her harness and looking like some queer marine specimen himself. Too shocked and stunned to swim, the five shipmates bobbed up and down like corks on the surface of the sea. Then Roger, spreading his wet and bedraggled wings and coughing violently from all the salt water he had swallowed, started dizzily back to the Crescent Moon. Nikobo had several long gashes in her tough hide, but still managed to

grin at Tandy.

"I—I must have lost the saw," panted the little boy, pulling himself wearily up on her back.

"Never mind the saw. I still have my journal, and look what I caught!" puffed Samuel Salt, dragging himself up on the other side of the hippopotamus. "Ship ahoy, Mates, a live and perfect specimen of a jellyfish boy." Holding up his prize, Samuel smiled blandly, all his danger and discomfort apparently forgotten.

"Oh, my eyes, ears and whiskers!" quavered Ato, peering out of his net of seaweed. "Is it for this we've been scraping our noses on the sea bottom?" Nodding cheerfully, Samuel plunged the squirming and transparent little water boy under the surface, holding him there, as Nikobo swam slowly and painfully back to the ship.

Chapter 16: The Storm!



Tandy was so exhausted from his dreadful experiences at the bottom of the sea hole he spent the rest of the morning flat on his stomach on deck making lively sketches from memory of the City of Seeweegia. Of the sea hole itself not a sign nor vestige remained. The sea, tumbling through the breach made by Nikobo, had closed it up forever and ever. Ato had Roger fetch bandages and witch hazel down to the raft and it took him two hours to bind up the cuts and hurts of the faithful hippopotamus. Then climbing wearily up the rope ladder to the deck, he spent another hour rubbing himself with oil and liniment, muttering darkly about reckless collectors who got themselves and their shipmates collected.

"What would WE have done if you'd never got out of that air bowl?" scolded Ato, waving the bottle of liniment at the Captain, who was cheerfully changing into dry clothes. "You know I know nothing about navigation nor one sail from t'other."

"Ah—but what you know about sauces!" retorted Samuel, rolling his eyes rapturously. "Of course, I'll grant a ship cannot sail on its stomach, but if the worst had come to the worst, you could have left a note for the sails on the

binnacle. 'If it comes up a blow, tie yourselves up.' Ha, ha! Tie yourselves UP!" Jamming his feet into his boots, Samuel blew a kiss to his still muttering shipmate and tramped down to the hold to settle his jellyfish boy in one of the large aquariums. The water boy, about half the size of Tandy, was a jolly enough looking specimen, but kept opening and shutting his mouth like a fish and staring anxiously from his captor to Mo-fi in the cage opposite. Whistling happily and unmindful of the cuts and bruises he had suffered, Samuel filled the bottom of the aquarium with pebbles and shells, put in several seaweed plants he'd fished up in the nets, and soon had the little stranger as happy and cozy as a clam. Giving him and Mo-fi a wafer of fish food, the Royal Explorer of Oz went above to have a look at the weather, for he did not like the way the ship was pitching.



In spite of the desperately fatiguing morning they had had, it seemed the voyagers were in for some further excitement. The sky had grown dark and threatening. Dark clouds in ever-increasing numbers scudded along from the east; the sea, rough and angry, was full of racing little whitecaps. Nikobo's raft plunged and rocketed up and down like a bucking bronco, flinging the hippopotamus from side to side and bringing her with squealing protests up against the rail first on one side and then on the other. Fearing for her safety, Samuel with Tandy's help rigged a temporary derrick to the mizzenmast, hove his vessel to, and bidding Nikobo swim round to the side, cleverly hoisted her to the main deck by a hook caught through her harness. Nikobo took it all quite calmly, coming down with a thankful little grunt, glad to be with her shipmates in the gale that was lashing the sea into a rolling, tossing fury of mounting gray water and foam.

The wind had risen now almost to hurricane proportions, and taking in all sail and with only a tarpaulin lashed in the main rigging, Samuel prepared with bared poles to ride out the storm. Ato, always ready and helpful in a crisis, trudged up and down the heaving decks with pails of hot soup and coffee, and after a hasty lunch, all hands fell to closing ports, battening hatches and removing from the decks all loose gear and equipment. As it was impossible to shove Nikobo

through the door of the main cabin, Samuel lashed her tightly to the mizzenmast and with an old sail round her shoulders the hippopotamus anxiously watched the mountainous waves breaking over the bow and running down into the scuppers. It was all so wild and new, so dangerous and exciting, Tandy begged Samuel to let him stay on deck. Much against his better judgment, Samuel finally gave his consent, tying Tandy fast to Nikobo and the mizzenmast. If anything happened to the ship, reflected Samuel, fighting his way back to the wheel, the hippopotamus could keep Tandy afloat and take care of him besides.

Ato and Roger, not being needed on deck and not caring for storms, shut themselves up in the main cabin for a game of checkers. But checkers and board soon flew through the air, and the two had all they could do to hang on to their chairs as the Crescent Moon pitched headlong into the cavernous hollows and struggled up the mountainous ridges of the great running seas.

Chapter 17: The Old Man of the Jungle!



In the splendid white marble Palace in the splendid White City of Ozamaland the nine Ozamandarins sat in solemn conference.

"This time we have succeeded," stated Didjabo, chief of the nine Judges of the realm, "this time we have succeeded and our plans may now be accomplished. Last time, we merely destroyed the King and Queen, neglecting to do away with the Royal Off-spring, Tazander Tazah, and for that reason we failed utterly. So long as this boy survived, the natives insisted on considering him their rightful King and Ruler. But, hah! that prophecy we invented about an aunt carrying him off was a clever and useful idea—eh, my fellow Zamians? Now as the child, with a little help on our part it must be confessed, has really been carried off and destroyed, we can blame these same silly females, and they and all the royal family can be tossed into the sea to pay for this heinous crime. Ha, ha! Quite an idea, a famous idea!" murmured Didjabo, and the eight Ozamandarins nodded their narrow heads in complete and satisfied agreement. "Leaving the throne clear for us—the Nine Faithful Servants of the People!" Again the Ozamandarins

nodded, but Didjabo, slanting his cruel little eyes up and down the long table, was already making plans to destroy the lot of them and have the whole great country for himself.

"But how can we be sure the boy is destroyed and out of the way?" questioned Lotho, the second Ozamandarin in point of rank and power.



"Because," Didjabo curled up his lips in a hard little smile, "the Old Man of the Jungle has brought us proof. Boglodore! BOGLODORE! It is our wish that you appear before us."

At Didjabo's call there was a slight rustle and stir behind the curtains in the doorway, and an immense wrinkled old native clad only in a turban and loin cloth stepped noiselessly into the Chamber of Justice. Without waiting for further orders, Boglodore began in a high, dismal, droning voice:

"Following the commands of the highest among you, I, Boglodore the Magician, did carry off on my famous, never known or seen flying umbrellaphant the heir and small King of this country, coming down after two days, on Patrippany Island. Not wishing to destroy the boy with my own hands, I left him to the wild beasts and savage Leopard Men known to inhabit this island. That, as you know, was five months and two weeks ago. Having just returned from a second flight to the Island where I found no trace or sign of the boy, I can safely assure you that he is no more, that he has undoubtedly been killed by the savages or the wild beasts of the jungle." There was not a trace of pity or remorse on the cruel flat faces of his listeners as Boglodore finished this shameful recital.

"In that case there is nothing left to do but punish the royal aunts and family, issue a proclamation of our accession to power, and divide up the Kingdom," mused Lotho, drumming thoughtfully on the table with his long skinny fingers.

"But do not forget my reward," wheezed Boglodore firmly. "For this cruel and infamous deed I was promised one tenth of Ozamaland and I am here to claim as my share the entire jungle reach of this country. Extending his arms, the old man of the jungle advanced threateningly toward the long table.

"Ha, ha! Just listen to him now," sneered Didjabo, gathering up his papers and looking insolently across at the angry native. "Have a care what you say, fellow. Too much of this and you'll go over the cliff with the royal relatives. Now, then, clear out! Your work is done! If you ever set foot in this city again, you shall be trampled beneath the feet of the royal elephants!"

"Ah—hhh!" Boglodore recoiled as if he had been confronted by a poisonous reptile. "So that's to be the way of it? Aha! Very good! I will go. But do not think this is the end! It is but the beginning!" Snapping his fingers under the long noses of the Ozamandarins, the old man, not bothering with the door, leapt out the window and vanished into the garden.

"Do you think that was quite wise?" questioned Teebo, third in rank of the Ozamandarins. "This fellow and his flying elephant are dangerous and may do us a world of harm."

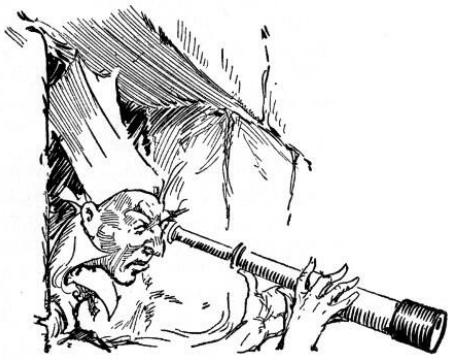
"Do not forget, anything he says will involve himself, and he'll have a hard time proving to the people that it was on my orders the young King was carried off."

"Oh, hush!" warned Lotho, glancing nervously over his shoulder. "Not another word!" Shrugging his shoulders and rising to indicate that the meeting was over, Didjabo started pompously for the door. "I will go now to prepare a Royal Proclamation explaining that as the young King has not after exhaustive search been found or located, the authority and governing power of the state shall pass to us, the Nine Faithful Ozamandarins of the Realm! We can then meet again and here in this star and barred Chamber of Justice divide the Kingdom among us."

"Very well, but see that you remember it is to be divided!" Staring fixedly at Didjabo, Lotho strode away, colliding violently at the door with a small breathless page who was entering on a veritable gallop.

"Your Honors! Your Ozamandarin Majesties!" shrilled the boy, wildly waving his trumpet instead of blowing upon it. "A ship—there is a ship with four masts beneath the chalk cliffs, a strange ship with full sail is riding into our harbor."

"There, there, don't shout!" snapped Didjabo, seizing the boy roughly by the shoulders. "Go back at once and discover what flag this ship flies from her masthead. Quickly now. RUN!"



"What could it mean? Where could it be from? Such a thing has never happened before!" muttered the others, hastening over to the long windows.

"Confoundation!" raged Didjabo as the page with frightened stutters turned and ran out of the Hall of Justice. "This ruins everything. Who are these meddling foreigners? And why do they have to arrive now of all times? NOW! Lotho! Teebo! Call out the camel corps and the white elephant guard. Have them drawn up in war formation on the chalk cliffs. You others!" impatiently Didjabo waved his arms at the six remaining Ozamandarins, "See to the defense of the palace!

If these meddlers set foot upon our territory they are to be trampled upon, trampled upon—do you understand?" Nodding with fierce and cruel determination, the eight tall Keepers of the White City set about carrying out Didjabo's orders. Didjabo, hurrying up to the highest tower in the castle, looked through his telescope to see what manner of ship had come sailing out of the west to spoil or postpone his well-laid plans.

Chapter 18: A New Country



Driven by the pitiless wind, pounded by the merciless sea, the Crescent Moon rode before the gale, coming, toward morning, into quiet waters at last. The sky, now pale grey instead of black, showed a small single star in the east, and with a huge sigh of weariness and relief Samuel let go the anchor and bade his crew turn in all standing. This they were only too glad to do, sleeping heavily and thankfully in their clothes, Nikobo still wrapped in her sail snoring like a whole band of music beneath the mizzenmast.

Tandy, to whom the storm had been a thrilling adventure, was the first to waken. Still stiff and bruised from the pounding he had taken as the Crescent Moon tossed and pitched in the terrible seas, he sprang eagerly out of his bunk, curious to know where the storm had carried them.

The morning mists, lifting like a shimmering veil or the curtain of a stage on some new and strange scene, showed a long white line of chalk cliffs to the east, and beyond the cliffs the dim outline of a great and splendid city. With joy and lively expectations Tandy had run out on deck, but now, after a long look over the port rail, he crept silently and soberly back to his cabin, closing the door softly behind him. Later, as the sun rose higher, and his shipmates awoke, the excited screams of Nikobo and Roger and the eager voices of Samuel and Ato told him that they too had seen the bright land beyond the cliffs. Already Samuel was clewing up his sail and above the rattle in the rigging Tandy could hear the rasp of the anchor cable as it came winding over the side. But he only bent lower over the fat book in his lap, and when the Read Bird, loudly calling his name, came hurtling through the port-hole, he did not even look up.

"Land! Land and MORELAND!" croaked Roger, dancing up and down on the foot of the bunk. "None of your pesky islands this time, but a whole long new continent. What in salt's the matter, youngster, this is no time to be a-reading!

Come on, come on, the Captain's looking for you!" As Roger peered sharply down at the book in Tandy's lap two tears splashed on the open page. Quickly brushing two more off his nose, the ship's cabin boy unwillingly met the puzzled gaze of the Read Bird.

"Roger," demanded Tandy in a smothered and unsteady voice, "which is most important, being a King or being a person?" Roger, his head on one side, considered this for a moment and then spoke quickly.

"Well, you can't be a good King without being a good person, so I should say, being a good person is most important."

"But it says here," with a furious sniff Tandy put his finger on the middle paragraph of the page, "'In no circumstances and for no reason may a King forsake his country nor desert his countrymen.'"

"What's that? What's this? Humph! Maxims for Monarchs. Well, what in topsails do we care for that musty volume?" Giving the book a vicious shove, Roger, forgetting how much he had formerly praised Ato's fat volume, fluttered down on Tandy's shoulder. "So THAT'S it!" he burst out explosively. "This pernicious country yonder is Ozamaland. Well, we can't spare you and that's final. They didn't know how to treat a good King when they had one, now let 'em practice on somebody else. Say the word, m'lad, and we'll put about and sail away as fast as a good ship can take us! CAPTAIN! Master Salt! Deck ahoy! All hands 'HOY!" Without waiting for Tandy's answer, Roger skimmed through the port and winged over to the Captain.



"Wait! Wait!" sputtered Tandy, hurrying aft where the officers and crew of the Crescent Moon were now engaged in earnest conversation. "Don't you remember you wanted some of those creeping birds and flying reptiles, Captain? Well, this is the place!" puffed the little boy, waving his arm toward the cliffs. "This is Ozamaland and I've got to go ashore. It's really all right," he continued earnestly as Samuel began unhappily rubbing his chin, "it's been a grand voyage and I've learned a lot, but a King has to stick to his post, hasn't he?"

"Not all the time," snapped Ato, giving his belt an indignant jerk. "You stuck to your post and they stuck you in a tower and then in a pig pen in the jungle. So what do you owe them? Nothing, say I, absolutely nothing!"

But Samuel Salt, regretful as he was to lose this handy young artist and cabin

boy, felt that Tandy must decide the matter for himself. "If you're as good a King as you are a seaman, I'm not the one to hold you back," he sighed sorrowfully. "But just let these lubbers start any more nonsense and I'll give them a taste of the rope. HAH! And we'll not be leaving you till everything's shipshape, and you can lay to that!"

"I'm not leaving you at all," snorted Nikobo, lumbering hugely over to Tandy and almost flattening him against the port rail. "I'll miss this ship worse'n the river, and Ato's cooking and the Captain's stories and Roger's jokes, but wherever Tandy goes I go, and that's flat!"

"Just plain noddling nonsense, putting him ashore," fumed Ato angrily. "He's not old enough to manage these wild tribesmen and scheming aristocrats. Besides, we need him on this expedition, and you know it." Samuel, sighing deeply, smiled at Tandy and Tandy, sighing just as deeply, smiled back.

"Never you mind," promised the former Pirate with a wink that somehow lacked conviction, "there'll be other voyages!" And seizing the wheel, he began tacking in toward Tandy's homeland. But he had lost all pleasure and interest in charting for the first time on any map the long continent of Tarara and adding strange animals and plants to his ever-growing collection. Losing Tandy spoiled the whole expedition for him, and by taking longer and wider tacks he delayed their landing to the latest possible moment.

But at last there they were in the very shadow of the chalk cliffs and with no further excuse for not going ashore. Nikobo had agreed to carry them and had abruptly heaved herself overboard, sending up a fountain of spray as high as the ship itself when she struck the water, thus astonishing no end the watchers on the bank. Tandy, after running down to the hold to say goodbye to Mo-fi and have a last look at the jellyfish boy, regretfully joined the others at the port rail. Having brought nothing aboard the Crescent Moon, he insisted on leaving in the same way, soberly waving aside all the gifts and presents Ato and Samuel sought to press upon him. Clad only in the leopard skin he had worn on Patrippany Island, he swung nimbly down the rope ladder. The Captain and the cook, in honor of Tandy's homecoming, had donned their finest shore-going togs, and Samuel, with a scimiter in his teeth, and Ato, armed as usual with his bread knife and a package he refused to explain, followed him more slowly down the ladder. Then they all climbed aboard the hippopotamus.

Roger, flying ahead with some Oz flags just for luck, could not help comparing the brown, hard-muscled young seaman with the skinny, fretful boy they had taken on at Patrippany Island. Trying to comfort himself with Tandy's improved health and spirits, he looked curiously at the great company assembled on the cliffs. All of the Nobles and their families in flowing white robes were present and many of the immense turbanned tribesmen who happened to be in the capital

had gathered to see for themselves the first ship that had ever touched the shore of Ozamaland. Beyond the Nobles and natives Roger could see row on row of white guards mounted on enormous white elephants and snow-white camels.

"Trouble, trouble, nothing but trouble!" mourned the Read Bird drearily to himself. Tandy, familiar with the whole coast, guided Nikobo to the only possible spot for landing and, grunting and mumbling, the hippopotamus hauled herself up on the rocks, glancing sharply and suspiciously at the little boy's subjects. A narrow path wound and curved up through the cliffs and, puffing and panting, Nikobo finally made her way to the top, where she stood uncertainly facing the milling multitude.

"Hail and greetings!" called Samuel Salt, raising his arm to attract their attention, for the crowd looked both dangerous and unfriendly. "We are here to return to you safe and sound your lost King, Tazander Tazah, rescued by us from the wild jungle of Patrippany Island."

"King? King?" shrilled a dozen shrill and unbelieving voices. "Where? Where?" and everyone craned his neck to get a better view of Nikobo and her three curious riders. "Is it really our lost and stolen Kinglet?"

"Yes!" cried Tandy, springing erect. "I am Tazander Tazah, King's son and son of a King's son. You are my lawful subjects and Ozamaland is my Kingdom!" A little shiver of excitement ran through the crowd at these words.



"He does in truth resemble our young ruler," murmured one Noble to another, "though much stronger and more bold." Drawing a long sword, he waved it imperiously above his head. "Summon the Ozamandarins," he called loudly. "They will decide whether this be our King or some small Impostor, and DEATH to all strangers and enemies who come in ships to lay waste our realm."

"Oh, hold your tongue!" advised Ato, settling himself more comfortably between Nikobo's shoulders. "Who are you to challenge the Royal Explorer of Oz, the King of the Octagon Isle—"

"And his Royal Read Bird," piped Roger, flying savagely round and round the head of the speaker.

"Yes, who are you to challenge the rightful ruler of Ozamaland?" cried Tandy, folding his arms and gazing calmly out over the curious throng.

"Hi, is this the young slip they kept locked in the tower? Hoo, Hoo!" yelled an old tribesman, brandishing his long lance. "He's the salt of the sea and the sand of the desert. Shame on you, Zamen, not to recognize and welcome your young King. I'm for you, young one, down to my last breath!" In spite of these brave words, the nobles, natives and guards made no move or motion to let Nikobo pass through. Then suddenly there was a break in the crowd and the nine square-hatted Ozamandarins stepped rigidly forward. And nine taller, thinner, meaner-visaged rogues, decided Samuel, lovingly fingering his scimiter, it had never been his misfortune to encounter. Didjabo, recognizing Tandy at once in spite of his new and seaman-like bearing, was the first to speak.

"The blessing of the stars, moon and sun upon you!" cried the wily chief, bowing rapidly ten times in succession, "And upon these strangers who have brought you safely back to these shores! Welcome, most welcome, small King and ruler of the Ozamanders!" Speaking calmly but with black fury in his heart to have his plans so unexpectedly thwarted, Didjabo advanced rapidly toward Nikobo. "And now that you are here and really safe, we must see that you are locked securely in the White Tower of the Wise Man away from all future hurt and harm!" Reaching the side of the hippopotamus, he put up his hand to help Tandy dismount.

"But I'm not going back to the Tower!" said Tandy, looking the Chief Ozamandarin straight in the eye. "Ever! I'm riding on to the castle, so kindly order some refreshments for my friends and shipmates."



"Hi, Yi, Yi!" approved the old tribesman, pounding the cliff with his lance. "Here's a King for us. What good did your Tower do before, old Square-Hat? He was carried off in spite of it, wasn't he? Well, trot along now and do as he says; he's the King, and I'm here to see he gets his rights!" Shocked by the determination in Tandy's voice and the evident delight of the crowd at his defiance, Didjabo put up his hand for silence.

"It is the law of the land that the nine Ozamandarins shall guard the life and preserve the health of the country's sovereign," stated Didjabo in his cold and impressive voice. "Until this boy becomes of age he must be cared for and protected from his enemies. Forward, guards! On to the Tower! You OTHERS!" Didjabo nodded disagreeably at Samuel Salt, Ato, Roger and Nikobo, "You others may return to your ship, where a suitable reward will be sent out to you. We are

deeply indebted to you for finding our King, but the law of Ozamaland says that all foreigners landing on our shores shall instantly and without delay be flung over the cliffs. In your case we graciously permit you to leave. Come, Tazander!"

While Samuel Salt could not help admiring the way the old Ozamandarin was trying to keep the upper hand, he had no intention of leaving till he had assured himself that Tandy was in safe and proper hands. "But surely you will wish to hear the story of how we found this boy and explain how he happened to be on that jungle island!" observed Samuel mildly. "Step back, my good fellow, Nikobo has large feet and she just might happen to tread on you."

"Yes," wheezed Nikobo sullenly, "I just might happen to do that very thing." Slipping round to the other side of the hippopotamus, Didjabo, paying no attention to either remark, tried to pull Tandy to the ground. But the little boy, remembering Roger's advice about lubbers gave him a fast and sudden poke in the nose that sent his hat flying off and the Ozamandarin himself rolling head over heels.

"Hurray, Hurray! Avast and belay! And down with old Square-Hats forever!" shrilled the Read Bird, while Ato and Samuel exchanged a proud and pleased glance. While the other Ozamandarins stood uncertainly, the crowd, long weary of the rigid rule of the nine judges, began to laugh and cheer.

"The King is King! Long live the King!" shouted the old tribesman vociferously.

But Didjabo pulling himself furiously to his feet, flung up his arm. "Guards! Guards!" he screeched venomously, "Do your work! Save this poor, misguided child from these unspeakable foreigners or we are all lost. Can you not see they are savages, sorcerers and enemies? Seize the King and over the cliff with these hippopotamic invaders!"

Chapter 19: Boglodore's Revenge

The word "hippopotamic" seemed to rouse the undecided guards to action, and Samuel, as the crowd moved uneasily aside to let the elephant and camel mounted guardsmen through, heartily wished himself back on the ship. Nikobo, squealing with rage and defiance, began moving cautiously back toward the path down the cliffs, but Ato, who had been merely biding his time, tore open his package and began tossing right and left the tumbleweeds and creeping vines which fortunately it had contained.



The first creeper caught Didjabo, bound him up and laid him by the heels before he could issue another order. Taking careful aim, Ato threw a creeping vine at each of the other Ozamandarins. The tumbleweeds, whirling beneath the feet of the elephants and camels, caused them to fall to their knees, tossing their riders over their heads, and between the yells of the guards, the squeals of the camels, and trumpeting of the elephants, confusion was terrific. The natives and Nobles and all who could still move or run set off at top speed for the city without once looking behind them. Muttering angrily under his breath, Ato continued to hurl vines and tumbleweeds till none was left. Unable to advance an inch, the white guard and their mounts rolled and groveled together in the deep sand.

"Now we can go on to the palace!" cried Tandy, a bit breathless by the suddenness of it all. "Oh, Ato, how did you ever happen to bring those plants along?"

"I suspected some of these subjects of yours were villains," answered Ato grimly, "and the only way to meet villains is with villainy. Forward march, my Lass! On to the King's castle!"

Picking her way around the fallen men and beasts, Nikobo, snorting at each step to show her superiority and contempt, set out for the Royal Palace. Of all the people who had run out on the cliffs, besides the securely bound Ozamandarins and the guard, only the old tribesman who had first cheered Tandy remained.

"Oh, please do come with us," invited Tandy earnestly as the old man stepped smilingly out of Nikobo's way. "You could tell me all about the tent dwellers and help me so much if you would."

"I am Chunum, the Sheik, head of a thousand tribes and speaking for them, I can say they all will proudly and gladly serve your brave young Majesty. Too long have the city dwellers ruled this great liberty-loving land."

"Then over the side and under the hatches with 'em," cried Roger, beside himself

with joy and exuberance at the neat way Ato had handled Tandy's subjects. "This boy's an able-bodied seaman and explorer and will stand no nonsense!"

"My sea is the desert," said Chunum, striding jauntily along beside Nikobo, "and my ship is a camel, but I'll wager we'll understand each other well enough for all that."

To Tandy, conversing eagerly with Chunum, the splendor of the White City of Om was an old story, but to the others it seemed, with its flashing marble walks, great waving palms and towering dwellings and castle, one of the loveliest capitals they had yet visited.

Word of the happenings on the cliff had traveled fast. Longing to welcome the young King, but fearing the strange magicians who had come with him, the Nobles had barred themselves in their fine houses and the natives had fled to the hills beyond the city gates. The many-domed marble palace was absolutely deserted when Nikobo pushed her way through the wide doors. Not a footman, page or courtier was in sight. Seeing no attention or service was to be had for some time, Ato hurried away to the kitchens and was soon happily at work preparing a splendid feast to celebrate Tandy's homecoming.

Tandy himself felt quiet and sad, examining with scant interest and enthusiasm the splendid rooms which he had never yet been allowed to live in. To tell the truth, he would have traded the whole castle for his small cabin aboard Samuel's ship. Samuel himself, never really happy or comfortable ashore, wandered about aimlessly, opening books on the long tables, peering out windows, and finally settling with a sigh of resignation in a huge chair beside the throne.

Nikobo had found a long pool and fountain in the same room and, lying at full length in this luxuriant marble bath, tranquilly waited for events to shape themselves.

"Why not sit on your throne?" asked Roger as Tandy seated himself on a small stool beside Samuel Salt.

"Oh, it's much too big for me," sighed Tandy, thinking how very big and lonely the palace would seem when all his shipmates had gone.

"Aho, and methinks you are right! Ahoy, the beginning of a beautiful idea doth at this moment start to seep through the head feathers, of which, more anon!" Chunum, who had never before heard a bird talk, stared at Roger in amazed interest and surprise, but giving him no more satisfaction than a mischievous wink, the Read Bird flew off to help Ato with the dinner. And now Samuel proceeded to tell the old tribesman how he had found Tandy in the jungle imprisoned in the wooden cage. As he finished, Chunum shook his head in stern displeasure.



"It has long been my conviction and belief," he stated solemnly, "that the Ozamandarins are at the bottom of this. Every year they usurp more and more power, and keeping the young King shut up in the Tower was but an excuse to give them their own will and way. Nor can I believe that the royal parents of this boy accidentally fell into the sea as they were reported to have done, or that the young aunts mentioned in the prophecy had anything at all to do with Tandy's abduction. Tell me, how long will the vines hold those villains prisoner, for only that long is Tazander safe. We must think and act quickly," said Chunum, tapping his staff thoughtfully on the floor.

"The vines will not unwind for two days and before THEN—HAH!" Samuel expelled his breath in a mighty blast and sprang purposefully to his feet. "Before then we shall put those fellows in a very safe place for Tandy and for them too, shiver my timbers!" Taking Chunum by the shoulder, Samuel started toward the door, and seeing the two intended to leave the castle, Nikobo climbed out of the fountain and offered to carry them. Tandy nodded absently as the two left the castle, his thoughts still far away on the Crescent Moon, and considering the work they had to do, Samuel and Chunum were well pleased to leave him behind.

With surprising speed the hippopotamus made the return trip to the cliffs. The effects of the tumbleweed had evidently worn off and the guards and their mounts had fled with the rest of the inhabitants of White City to the hills. But the nine Ozamandarins still lay in their curious cradles in the deep coarse sand. As Samuel and Chunum, in absolute agreement as to what should be done, rolled off Nikobo's back, a furious bellow and screech brought them up short. Nikobo, startled out of her usual calm, fell back on her haunches and after one horrified look upward buried her head in the sand.



"It can't be!" cried Samuel, clutching Chunum's sleeve. "It can't be, but it is!"

"An elephant, a flying elephant!" panted Chunum, dragging Samuel from under the immense shadow. "Flatten yourself in the sand, seaman, and we may yet be spared." As Samuel, more amazed than scared at so strange and curious a specimen, and even vaguely hopeful of capturing the unwieldy creature, made no move, Chunum dragged him down by main force. The elephant meanwhile lighted like some gigantic butterfly on the edge of the cliff. Fairly bleating with fright and terror, the nine Ozamandarins watched him swooping toward them with a sinister and soundless speed. Just behind his ear perched Boglodore, the Old Man of the Jungle, looking cruel and ugly as the genie of all evil.

"Revenge! Revenge!" shrilled the turbaned native, clenching his fists. "Now shall Boglodore have his reward!" Addressing himself to Chunum and Samuel Salt, the Old Man of the Jungle began screaming out the story of his wrongs. "For these scheming rascals I carried away on Umbo, my great and useful umbrellaphant, the young King of this country. For this I was to receive one-tenth of the Kingdom, the Ozamandarins themselves to divide the rest of the country among them. But Hah! What happened?" Dancing up and down on the elephant's head, Boglodore again clenched his fists, his face distorted with rage and fury. "What happened? Why, these miserable cheats refused to pay me, intending to keep the whole country for themselves. But hearken well, you and YOU!" Jerking his thumb contemptuously toward his rigid and helpless enemies, the Old Man continued his story.

"All along I have suspected these thieving Zamans; all along I intended to fool them and return the little King to his castle, keeping only the jungle for my own. That is why I built the boy his cage in the jungle and set Nikobo, the great hippopotamus, to watch over him, giving her the power of speech and the desire to seek out and protect this unfortunate child of an unfortunate country. I am a

magician and could well bring about these things. You, whoever you are, who found and brought him back to Ozamaland did no more than I myself intended to do and intend to do now. After restoring Tandy to his throne, I meant to deal with his enemies, and now as they are so neatly bound up and ready, I shall reward them well for their pains and treachery."

"Stop! Stop! Avast there and belay!" shouted Samuel Salt as the umbrellaphant, obeying an order from the terrible Old Man, picked up Didjabo in his trunk and flew swiftly toward the cliff's edge. But Chunum, again dragging Samuel down, whispered fiercely in his ear.

"It is justice, seaman, and only what we ourselves planned to do. The vines will keep these rogues afloat for two days, then haply they will sink—not to die, as death comes not to the people of my country, but to lie for long forgotten ages at the bottom of the sea, harmless and sodden, and unable to do any more harm to the country they have so dishonorably served and betrayed!"



Shuddering and in a tense silence, Samuel and the Sheik watched the umbrellaphant toss the wretched Ozamandarins one after the other into the sea. The immense zooming monster fascinated the Captain of the Crescent Moon. Not wings, but a balloon-like structure of its own tough skin billowing over its back like a howdah, enabled Umbo to navigate in the air. Samuel was anxious for further talk with the Old Man of the Jungle, but as the last Ozamandarin fell over the cliff the umbrellaphant, with a trumpet of defiance, headed rapidly for the open sea.

"Look! Look! It's getting away!" cried Samuel, rushing to the cliff's edge and almost tumbling over. "Do you realize that there goes the only umbrellaphant in captivity?"

"Well, well, and what if it is?" muttered Chunum, again pulling Samuel back to safety. "I expect Boglodore does not find this country healthy after the pretty story he has just told us, and come, COME, Master Seaman, what would you do with a flying elephant aboard your ship?"

"I'd tie it to the mast and carry it back to Oz," explained Samuel, staring gloomily after the disappearing prize. "Why, it would be the most rare and amazing specimen ever brought back from anywhere, and now—now—I've lost it—" Samuel's arms dropped heavily to his sides and turning away from the cliff, he began walking slowly back toward Nikobo, who had at last ventured to lift her head from the sand. Surprised enough was the hippopotamus to learn that she

had been given her power of speech by the ugly little magician on the umbrellaphant, and frightened lest she forget Tandy's language, she began talking rapidly to herself.

"But you forget what all this means!" panted Chunum, catching up with the Explorer and shaking him energetically by the shoulder. "Why, this clears up the whole mystery. Not an AUNT but an ELEPHant carried Tazander to Patrippany Island. We must return quickly to the castle and release his innocent relatives. I myself will call back Tandy's frightened subjects and tell them of the great good fortune that has befallen, that we are rid of nine rogues and have a brave young King to rule Ozamaland. Come, come, do not stand here dreaming about lost elephants; there is much to be accomplished and done."

"Goosewing my topsails, you're right!" breathed Samuel Salt, coming completely out of his reverie. "Round up the citizens, comrade, and I'll carry the good news to the castle."

Chapter 20: King Tandy



When Samuel reached the castle, he found Ato and Roger had set a small cozy table in the Throne Room, and Tandy was anxiously looking out of one of the gold-framed windows for his return. The whiffs from the covered dishes were so appetizing the Royal Explorer of Oz was almost inclined to let his news wait till afterward. But thinking better of it, he blurted out the whole story of what had happened to the Ozamandarins.

"Then they're all gone and done for," sniffed Ato, seating himself at the head of the table. "Well, a couple of hundred years at the bottom of the sea should soak all the sin and wickedness out of 'em! And you say it was an umbrellaphant that carried Tandy off? My! and MY! Dear, dear and DEAR! Just pour me a cup of coffee, Roger. I'm feeling weaker than soup!"

"Well, how do you suppose I feel," grumbled Samuel Salt, throwing his hat up on a bronze figure, "to lose an elegant specimen like that? Why, I'll wager we'll never see another creature like it!"

"There! There! Always talking about the elephant that got away instead of appreciating your good fortune!" scolded Ato, throwing a corn muffin down to Nikobo and lifting the gold cover off the roast fowl.

"Yes, and you'd better listen to OUR news, Master Salt!" Roger said, pouring a cup of coffee for all hands.

"News? NEWS? Has anything happened here?" Samuel looked more anxious than interested.

"Oh, YES!" cried Tandy, running round to his side of the table and pressing eagerly against Samuel's knee. "Roger has a wonderful plan and I as King of Ozamaland have agreed to it, and oh, Samuel, SAMUEL!" Forgetting he usually called the tremendous seaman "Captain," Tandy flung both arms round his neck and almost squeezed the breath out of him. "I'm going straight back on the Crescent Moon, and I'm not coming ashore for years and years. I'm going with you to Ev, Oz, Elbow Island and everywhere!"

"What?" spluttered Samuel Salt, disentangling himself with great difficulty and holding Tandy off at arm's length. "Are you joking? Are you crazy? Have you abdicated or what? Why, this is too good to be true!"

"But it is true!" insisted Roger, strutting up and down the table and illy concealing his pride and satisfaction.

"Oh, tell him, tell him," begged Tandy, too happy to speak for himself.

"Well," said Roger, spreading his wings self-consciously, for the plan was his and he felt prouder of it every minute, "we are placing Ozamaland under the general rule and protection of Oz and leaving as Ruler in Tandy's place that long-legged son of the desert, Chunum. Now there's a fellow who can handle these scary Nobles and natives and wild elephant and camel riders. A King must complete his education before he starts ruling, you know." Roger paused to scratch his head and wink gaily at Samuel Salt. "And if this King chooses to finish his education on our ship, that is his own affair."

"Oh, quite! Quite!" Samuel began to rock backward and forward and roar with merriment. "Roger, you rascal, you've done as good a job of reasoning as a whole flock of Wise Men! Fall to, Mates, now we can enjoy our victuals and I give you a toast to King Tandy, Cabin Boy, Explorer and Artist Extraordinary to this Expedition!"

"Tandy! Tandy!" echoed Ato and Roger, lifting their coffee cups.

"Tandy! Tandy!" mumbled Nikobo, who was lunching largely and luxuriantly on the flowers in a low window box. "When do we sail?"

Chapter 21: A Voyage Resumed



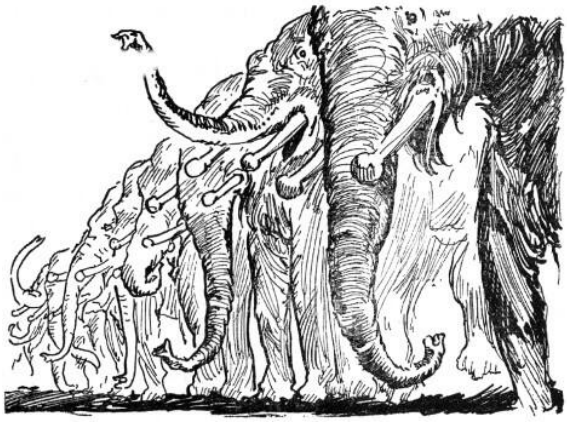
Anxious as Tandy was to return to the Crescent Moon and continue the voyage, it was a whole week before they finally shoved off. Chunum, true to his word, had rounded up the frightened citizens of the capital and explained to them the wicked plots of the Ozamandarins and their punishment by Boglodore, the Old Man of the Jungle. Then Tandy, addressing them from the castle balcony, called upon them to consider Chunum as their King until he himself should have completed his education in foreign parts and aboard the Crescent Moon, during which time he promised to keep them always in mind and have their welfare always at heart. Next, Tandy explained how Ozamaland was now a province and under the general rule and protection of Ozma of Oz, how settlers from that famous fairyland would soon arrive to help them build new cities and towns, tame the wild jungles of the interior and repel the dangerous invasions of the Greys.

Here Chunum rose to declare he himself would be responsible for peace along the border between Amaland and Ozamaland, that the Greys had long desired to be friends with the Whites, but trouble had been stirred up by the Ozamandarins so they might have the credit of protecting the country. Then Tandy spoke again of all the advantages that would be enjoyed from their association with the Kingdom of Oz. It was a long and splendid speech, Roger and Tandy having spent the whole morning in its preparation, and delighted and surprised by the energy and ambition of their young Ruler, Tandy's subjects cheered him long and vociferously, greeting each new plan and proposal with loud acclaim and enthusiasm. The royal aunts and relatives, already released from the castle dungeons and restored to their royal dwellings, could not speak highly enough of their young relative's bravery and cleverness and the bravery and cleverness of all of his new friends. They quite wore Nikobo out with their questions and petting and the hippopotamus sighed hugely for the time when they would all be at sea.

"Was I right or was I wrong?" questioned Roger on the third afternoon as Tandy, resplendent in his court suit of white velvet, reviewed the vast parade of Loyal

Nobles and Natives, and the long lines of elephants and camels went sweeping by the palace. "They love you just as much for going away as they would if you stayed. And Chunum is a Man in a Million."

"Right!" Tandy nodded, waving happily to the crowds that in a high holiday mood thronged the walks and parks of the beautiful White City.



Chunum had taken Samuel Salt and Ato on an expedition into the jungle so that the Royal Explorer of Oz could procure a creeping bird and flying reptile for his collection. Nikobo, old jungaleer that she was, had gone along to see that no harm came to them. To Tandy a snake with feathers and a bird with scales and fangs was no novelty, but Samuel, returning with a pair of each, considered them the most peculiar and precious of his queer specimens. He carried their cages everywhere he went and spent long rapt hours watching the snakes fly and the birds creep about their new cages. Ato had discovered a new and rare fruit and had brought along several slips to plant in the rail boxes he had outside the galley. Nikobo had swum to her heart's content in a green and muddy jungle stream and all three were now quite ready and anxious to continue the voyage. Aboard the Crescent Moon one of the Guards had been established to feed the monkey fish and water boy and tend to the plants in the hold and serve as watchman. And early one bright morning, just a week after they had landed, the members of the Royal Exploration Party of Oz set forth from the palace.

Oz flags fluttered and snapped in the fresh morning breeze, mingling with the white banners of Ozamaland, and the streets and avenues were lined with Tandy's cheering and now quite cheerful subjects. Riding Nikobo, accompanied by Chunum on a white elephant and the entire camel corps and elephant guard, the party made their way down to the water's edge, feeling exactly, as Ato whispered in a laughing undertone to Roger, like a whole circus and a zoo. Besides Roger, Tandy, Samuel Salt and Ato, Nikobo carried two large cages and two small cages. In the small cages were the flying reptiles and creeping birds. In the large cages a baby white camel and a baby white elephant.

"You'll sink, my Lass," worried Samuel Salt, as Nikobo, having safely made her way down the rocky cliff road, waded confidently out into the sea.

"Not me," murmured the hippopotamus comfortably. "You may get wet, but I'll get you safely out to the ship. Trust me."

"Goodbye! Goodbye, all!" cried Tandy, standing up on her back to wave to the crowds collected on the cliffs. Now that he was leaving, he felt a strange fondness for them. "Goodbye, Chunum! I'll be back, never fear!"

"Goodbye, Little Fellow! Goodbye, Little King! A fair and far-away voyage to you," called the tall old desert chief, standing up in his stirrups to wave his long lance. "To the sun—the moon—the stars I commend you! Go in happiness and return in health and live long to rule over Ozamaland."

"You take care of the country and we'll take care of the King," shouted Samuel. "Goodbye! Goodbye! Be watching, all of you, for the ships from Oz!"

"Goodbye! Goodbye!" called the Nobles, the natives, the guards; even the elephants and camels raised their shrill voices in farewell as Nikobo swam strongly away from the shore and toward the Crescent Moon.

The guard left in charge of the ship thankfully turned the vessel over to its rightful owners and, shaking Tandy feelingly by the hand, climbed down the ladder and dropped nervously on the back of the hippopotamus, who was to carry him to shore.

"Here, Brainless, lend a hand with the freight," yelled Roger as Tandy stood gazing rather thoughtfully toward the cliffs. "The King's ashore! Long live his cabin boy! I'll carry these pesky reptilia if you take the camel." Roger winked at Tandy as Samuel Salt, bent double under the baby elephant's cage, started carefully down to the hold. The baby camel and its cage were so small Tandy could manage them quite easily, and with a little laugh he hurried after Samuel and Roger. By the time they had finished Nikobo had returned from her shore trip and climbed thankfully back on her raft.

"All hands stand by to heave up the anchor," bellowed Samuel, stepping cheerfully over to his sail controls. "Anchors aweigh! and away we go, boys, and the hippopotamus take the hindmost!"

"Ho, ho! Well, she's built for it," roared Ato, bending his weight to the cable as sail after sail rattled up the masts and bellied out from the yards. "Where to now, Sam-u-el? Oz?"

"OZ, I should say not! We've a lot of geography to discover before we go back to Oz. We'll need a roc's egg before we go there, eh, Tandy? A roc's egg and sixty more islands for Ozma's Christmas stocking."



"Oh! Will we really spend Christmas in Oz?" cried Tandy, skipping up and down the deck, and forgetting all about his subjects waving from the cliffs.

"Why not?" demanded Samuel Salt, letting his hands fall happily upon the wheel. "Oz is as merry a place as any to spend Christmas, eh, Roger?"

"Merry as eight bells!" cried Roger, flying joyfully into the rigging. "Ahoy! Ahoy! Nothing but sea t'seaward!"

And when the Crescent Moon flies over Ev and drops down the Winkie River on Christmas morning with its chart full of islands and curious continents and its hold full of strange beasts, plants and treasure, I for one should like to be there, shouldn't you?



Stories help us explore cultures, learn moral lessons, connect with nature — or simply have fun. That's why ririro.com offers 3,000+ free stories — fairy tales, fables, bedtime stories, myths and more — for every age, in 13 languages, with free printable PDFs and often audio. Reading should be a right, not a privilege. Share ririro.com and spread the joy of reading.
Instagram: @ririro_reading · Pinterest: pinterest.com/ririrocom