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## **Family Plays**

# KING PATCH AND MR. SIMPKINS

Fantasy

by

ALAN CULLEN



# KING PATCH AND MR. SIMPKINS

From England. Completely absurd, nonsense fantasy,  
peopled with unforgettable characters.

***Fantasy. By Alan Cullen. Cast: 8m., 2w., 2 either gender.*** An unemployed jester, down on his luck, recklessly releases a Djinn from captivity, who grants him a wish. Against the advice of his companion, a distinguished English sheepdog named Mr. Simpkins, he wishes to be a king. But this proves complicated, as he first has to pass the Test, and he finds his kingdom impoverished and endangered and protected only by two bumbling baronets who are constantly on the verge of killing each other, for love of the Lady Fenella. Bewitched unintentionally by Basil the Wuthering Beast, King Patch begins to turn into a rabbit, then falls into the clutches of Drusilla the Hag of the Crag, who needs a rabbit and a dog for the dexter and sinister supporters of her coat of arms. It takes the Yale, “an absurd figure with spots and serrated horns curving opposite ways, and inconsequential tufts of hair, like a goat gone wrong,” to rescue King Patch and Mr. Simpkins, foil Drusilla, find Lady Fenella’s true knight, and restore the kingdom to prosperity. *Four simple sets, largely furnished with hangings. Fantastic costumes.*

Code: K40

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King Patch and Mr. Simpkins  
(Cullen)

# King Patch and Mr. Simpkins

A Play

by

ALAN CULLEN

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311 Washington St., Woodstock, IL 60098

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# King Patch and Mr. Simpkins

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## Characters

**PATCH, A Fool**

**MR. SIMPKINS, An Old English Sheepdog**

**A DJINN**

**ROUGEBUCKET, A Herald**

**SIR FENIMORE**

**SIR BATTLEDORE**

**LADY FENELLA**

**DRUSILLA, The Hag of the Crag**

**BASIL, A Basilisk**

**The YALE**

**The UNICORN KNIGHT**

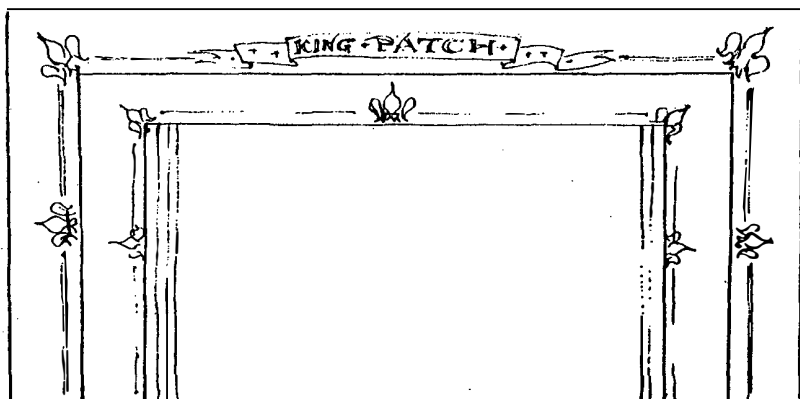
**The VOICE of the Pelican**

## Scenes

**Act One:     The Tree  
                  Nebuly**

**Act Two:     Raguly  
                  Gobony**

**Act Three:   Flory Counterflory  
                  Gobony  
                  Flory Counterflory**



**BASIC SET—TWO FALSE PROSCENIA, WITH ONE SET OF TRAILERS**

**NOTES:** The tree, throne, and coat of arms are best built on boat-trucks, for ease of scene change.

The throne turns round, to show a smaller throne on the other side.

The nebuly banner is best flown.

**HERALDRY:** Nebuly is a wavy line, as shown in the scene sketch for Act One, Nebuly, Page 5.

Raguly is a ragged line, as shown in the scene sketch for Act Two, Raguly, Page 6.

Gobony is a checked border, as shown in the scene sketch for Act Two, Gobony, Page 7.

Flory-Counterflory is the flower de luce reversed alternately on either side of a line, as shown in the scene sketch for Act Three, Flory-Counterflory, Page 7.

A Basilisk is a serpent- or dragon-like creature whose glance is deadly.

A Yale is a horned, spotted, goat-like creature.

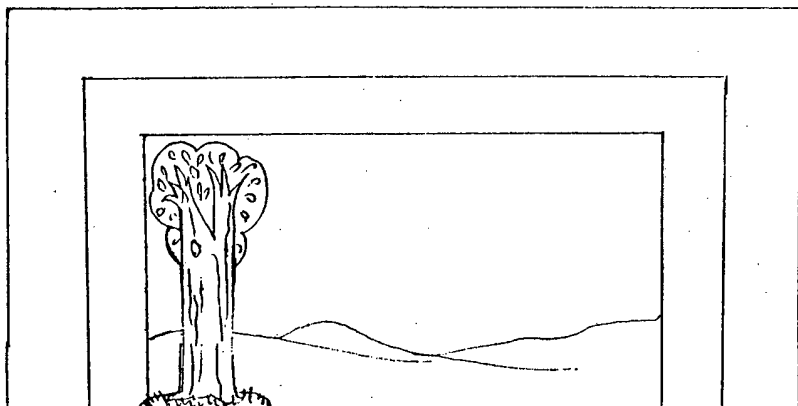
A martlet is a swallow with no feet.

A Hippogriff is half-horse, half-eagle.

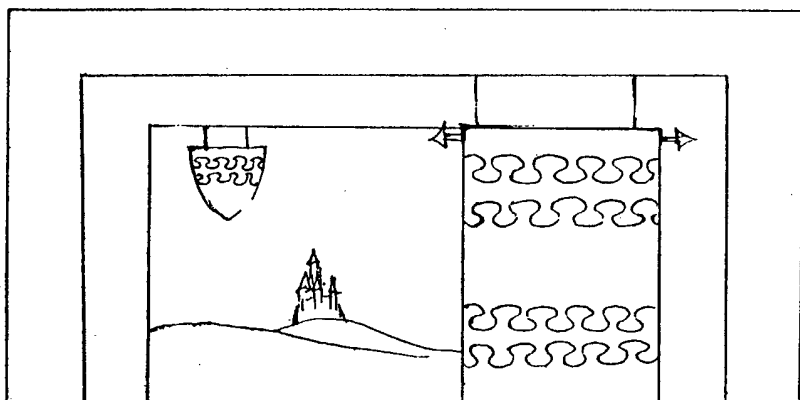
**SHIELDS:** Ideally, two colours are never used contiguously. They are always separated by gold or silver; e. g. in the barry-nebuly pattern, a bar of gold might be alternated with a bar of blue throughout.

**REFERENCE:** "Shakespeare's Heraldry" by C. W. Scott-Giles, published by Dent, is a useful source, invaluable also for Shakespeare's historical plays.

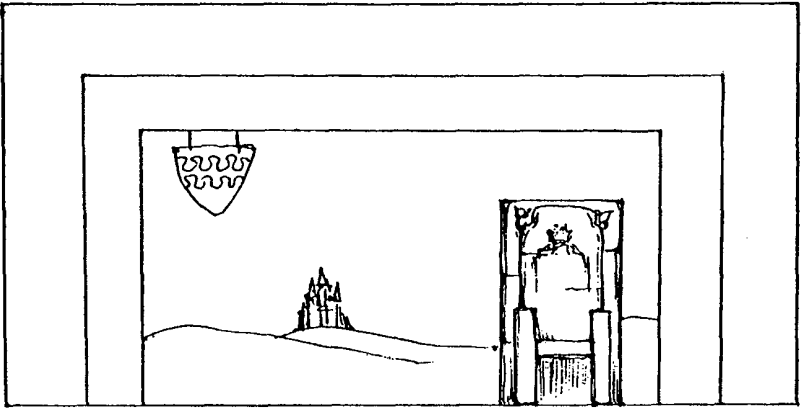




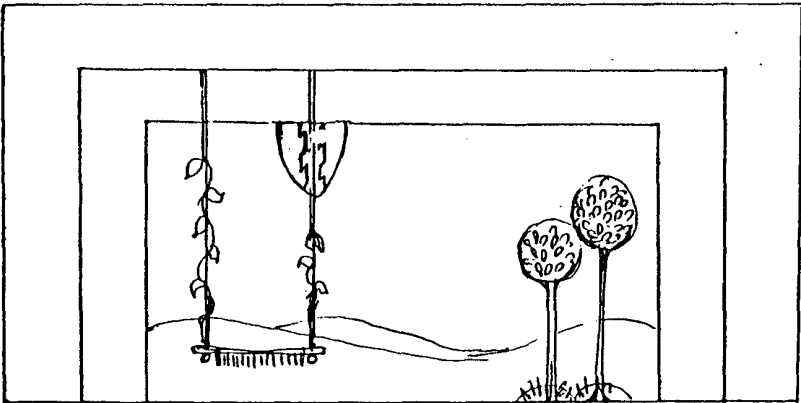
**ACT ONE OPENING—TREE, GROUND ROW.**



**ACT ONE—NEBULY**



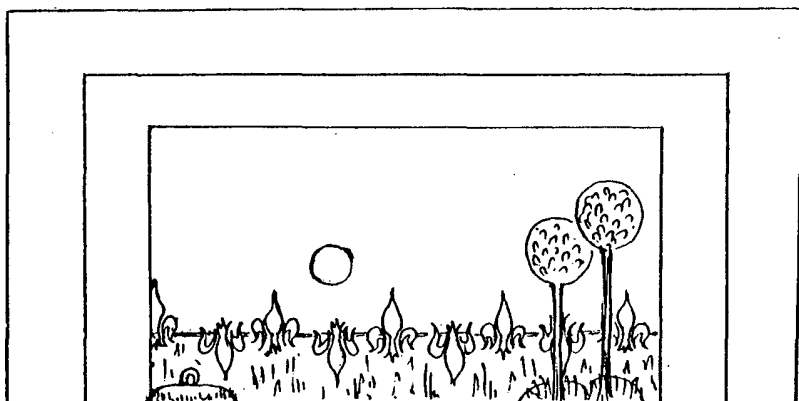
**ACT ONE—THE THRONE.**



**ACT TWO—RAGULY.**



**ACT TWO—GOBONY.**



**ACT THREE—FLORY COUNTER-FLORY.**

## ACT ONE

*(Open country. An ancient, twisted tree on one side of the stage. At the other, Patch the Fool in shabby motley and his dog, Mr. Simpkins, a large, shaggy, deliberate Old English Sheepdog. They sigh heavily.)*

PATCH. Banished.

*(Simpkins howls in sympathy.)*

Discharged.

*(Simpkins growls.)*

Sacked without notice.

*(Simpkins barks.)*

That's the trouble with the entertainment business. One minute you're a star, a royal favourite, with your name over the draw-bridge in illuminated lettering. Next minute—banished from the court for ever. And all because the queen was not amused.

*(The dog rises and disinterestedly sniffs at the tree.)*

You know, Mr. Simpkins—

*(He turns to find Simpkins at the tree.)*

Mr. Simpkins! Heel, sir!

*(Simpkins looks at him gravely.)*

Heel, sir! Come back here!

*(The dog sighs and slowly returns.)*

And leave that tree alone. You never know where it's been. Now sit. Sit, I tell you.

*(Simpkins gives him a withering look, and sits with the heavy sigh of a large dog.)*

That's better. It's very rude to walk away when somebody's talking to you. One expects it of people, but a dog should know better. Even one as shaggy as you are. Now as I was saying. If ever you have any shaggy children, Mr. Simpkins, you must never let them think of going into Show Business. You must tell them quite plainly—

*(Simpkins looks at the tree and barks suddenly.)*

Don't do that!

*(The dog growls and barks sharply.)*

Don't be such a stupid animal, Simpkins. There's nobody there.

*(Simpkins whines.)*

There isn't, I tell you.

*(Simpkins growls.)*

Oh, all right, we'll go and see; but I'm quite sure there isn't a soul for miles. You're just being stupid.

*(Patch goes all round the tree and returns.)*

There you are. What did I tell you? Not a sign of anybody. Now just relax.

*(Simpkins still growls nervously.)*

All right, if you don't like it here we'll go somewhere else. It doesn't matter much in any case where we go. No job, no money, no prospects. We can starve just as easily anywhere else. Come on.

*(Patch begins to go. With a final defiant bark at the tree, Simpkins trots after him. They are stopped by a voice issuing from the tree, thin and muffled.)*

DJINN. Help me!

PATCH. Who said that?

DJINN. Help me!

PATCH. Simpkins, was that you?

*(Simpkins barks.)*

Who can it be, then?

DJINN. Help me! Flee not from me!

PATCH. Flee not from me? But there's nobody here. How can I flee not from nobody?

DJINN. Succour me in my distress and I will make thee rich beyond the dreams of avarice.

PATCH. My word, you do talk posh, don't you?

DJINN. Of thy charity I pray thee, release me!

PATCH. "Of thy charity I pray thee release me"—very nicely put, I must say; and beautifully spoken. Have you had lessons?

DJINN *(Impatiently.)* Let me out!

PATCH. All right, all right; there's no need to get tetchy. Now where exactly are you?

DJINN. Fool! I am here in vile constraint, here in the woody entrails of this oaken cell.

PATCH. Oaken cell?

DJINN *(Exasperated.)* I'm in the tree!

PATCH. Oh you're in the tree! Right in it; trapped in the trunk?

DJINN. Trapped—like a cony in a gin. Oh, the misery!

PATCH. Yes, I can imagine. What are you doing in there, then?

DJINN. What boots it wherefore?

PATCH. I beg your pardon?

DJINN. What does it matter why I am here? Oh please, please delay no more, but set me free.

PATCH. Yes, well it's all very well to keep saying that, but what exactly do you want me to do?

DJINN. The seal. Break the seal that binds me.

PATCH. What seal? I don't understand.

DJINN. Oh thou fool, ignorant as the dirt beneath thy slavish feet!

*(The tree shakes with the anger of the Djinn.)*

Free me! Free me!

PATCH. Here, hold on a minute. I don't mind being called a fool, because that's my profession, but ignorant as dirt—that's not very nice, is it?

DJINN. Oh pity me and set me free!

PATCH. I'm not very sure I want to.

DJINN. Liberate me from my unhappy fate!

PATCH. You said I was ignorant.

DJINN. You are wise with the wisdom of prophets.

PATCH. As dirt.

DJINN. As the dust of the stars.

PATCH. Well say you're sorry, then.

DJINN. I grovel at your illustrious feet. Oh, forgive me and break the seal!

PATCH. Where is this seal?

DJINN. On the trunk of the tree . . . Find it and break it . . . Oh, quickly, quickly!

PATCH. Can't see anything that looks like a seal. How big is it?

DJINN. As the palm of your hand—oh, quickly, quickly.

PATCH. How high up is it?

DJINN. Knee-high when the tree was a sapling. It will be over your head by now.

PATCH. Over my head! Well why didn't you say so? . . . I've found it! It's embedded in the trunk. It must have been here a century.

DJINN. More. More. Five hundred years.

PATCH. Five hundred years! Have you been in there five hundred years?

DJINN. Never mind how long. Break it. Break it!

PATCH. All right, I'm being as quick as I can. Though I don't see what good breaking the seal will do.

DJINN. Do as you are told, and don't ask so many stupid questions!

PATCH. My word, you're impatient, whoever you are. I should have thought after five hundred years a few more minutes wouldn't make much difference.

*(Patch picks up a stone.)*

DJINN. Let me out!!

PATCH *(About to strike the seal; hesitates.)* Just a moment, though. How do I know what you are? How do I know you are not some horrible monster who will tear me to pieces the minute I let you out?

DJINN. Free me!!

PATCH. I'm sorry, but I don't trust you, and I think it's better to leave you where you are. I don't think Simpkins likes you. I'm going away.

DJINN. Stop! I will not harm thee. I will be thy slave and serve thee all the days of thy life, if only thou wilt free me. I will give thee wealth, power, anything, only free me.

PATCH. Anything?

DJINN. Anything, anything.

PATCH. Swear it, then. Swear it by the seal that binds you.

DJINN. I swear. I swear by the seal.

PATCH. Good enough. Mr. Simpkins, you are a witness to that.

*(Simpkins whines nervously.)*

Oh don't fuss. I'm letting him out, whatever you say.

*(Patch strikes the seal three times with the stone. At the third stroke, there is a crash of thunder and the tree splits apart. In the jagged V of it the fearsome figure of the Djinn rises in a cloud of vapour, stretches his arms, throws back his head and laughs loud and long.)*

DJINN. The sun still shines! After five long centuries the sun still shines!

PATCH. Who—who are you?

DJINN. My name is Ahriman the Djinn. And I can ride on the wind again, and tear across the sky again—I shall be half across the globe in the blink of an eye. Do you see a white cloud high up yonder?—There I shall sleep tonight.

PATCH. Be a bit damp, won't it?

DJINN. My first night's sleep for half a millenium, because I am free again! Free!

*(He laughs exultantly.)*

PATCH. I'm sure it's very nice for you. But how did you get in there in the first place?

DJINN. The story is too long, and too painful, and it happened too long ago. But it was a man who imprisoned me here, and for that I shall crush beneath my feet every human being that crosses my path. And I shall begin with you.

PATCH. Here, wait a minute. What about your promise?

DJINN. What promise, worm?

PATCH. You promised to make me rich, to give me anything I wanted if only I would free you. So I freed you.

DJINN. The more fool thou to trust me.

PATCH. But you swore by the seal.

DJINN. The seal is broken and the promise with it. You die.

*(The Djinn steps out of the tree. Simpkins growls.)*

What is that?

PATCH. That's my dog Simpkins.

DJINN. *(With a little less assurance)* I shall crush him too.

*(The Djinn takes a step towards them. Simpkins makes a sudden rush at him, barking furiously. The Djinn retreats hastily as Simpkins pins him against the tree.)*

DJINN. *(weakly)* Call him off.

PATCH. Why should I? I don't think Simpkins has a very high opinion of djinns, and I'm beginning to agree with him.

DJINN. *(Trembling)* Please. Please take him away.

PATCH. You still going to crush me underfoot, then?

DJINN. No, Master, no.

PATCH. You'll keep your promise?

DJINN. Yes, Master, yes.



PATCH. You'll make me rich?

DJINN. Yes, yes.

PATCH. Give me whatever I ask?

DJINN. The world is yours, Master.

PATCH. Right. Here, Simpkins!

*(Simpkins leaves the Djinn and returns to Patch.)*

Now apologize.

DJINN. *(Prostrating himself)* Pardon, Master. I am your slave, to do your bidding whatever it might be. Command me.

PATCH. This needs a bit of thinking about. There's all sorts of things I could do with—I just don't know where to start.

DJINN. The whole world is at your disposal, Master.

PATCH. That's just the trouble—I'm spoilt for choice. Tell you what—you just enjoy your freedom for a bit, and when I think of something, I'll let you know. How's that?

DJINN. To hear is to obey. When you wish to summon me, strike with your right foot three times upon the ground.

PATCH. All right, I'll do that . . . Oh, just before you go—there is one thing.

DJINN. Master?

PATCH. It just occurred to me Mr. Simpkins might want something—a nice fat marrow bone perhaps, eh Simpkins?

*(Simpkins thinks a minute, then barks two or three times.)*

I wonder what that meant?

DJINN. To hear is to obey.

PATCH. What?

*(The Djinn disappears.)*

Well, he seems to understand you even if I don't. I wonder what you asked for. I've a feeling it wasn't a marrow-bone.

*(The Djinn reappears with a bowler hat, which he solemnly hands to the dog. Simpkins puts it on and sits back on his haunches with an expression of bliss.)*

PATCH. Are you sure that's what he wanted?

DJINN. Quite sure, Master. And this . . .

*(The Djinn produces an umbrella, and gives it to the dog.)*

PATCH. Extraordinary. What are these things?

DJINN. (*Shrugging*) I do not know, Master. They have not yet been invented. Is that all for the present?

PATCH. That's all, thank you.

(*The Djinn disappears.*)

PATCH. Well, fancy you hankering after something like that. But what for?

(*Simpkins barks.*)

I wish you could speak, Mr. Simpkins, I really do.

(*The voice of the Djinn echoes from above.*)

DJINN. (*Off*) To hear is to obey!

(*A sound of strange, mysterious music. Mr. Simpkins rises and stands erect, pushes his hat to a more fetching angle, leans on his umbrella, and clears his throat.*)

SIMPKINS. I was beginning to wonder how long it would take you to get around to wishing that, old chap.

PATCH. Simpkins! You spoke!

SIMPKINS. Of course. You wished it, you know.

PATCH. What? You mean all my wishes are to be granted from now on, whether the Djinn is here or not?

SIMPKINS. I hardly think so. The number of wishes in these cases is always limited—it's generally three, from what I gather.

(*Patch laughs.*)

What are you laughing at?

PATCH. I don't know—you, I suppose.

SIMPKINS. And what's odd about me, may I ask?

PATCH. Well, standing there and holding forth in that funny little hat and that stick thing.

SIMPKINS. It is not a funny little hat. It's a bowler.

PATCH. A bowler.

SIMPKINS. Yes. Worn by all the best people—or will be one day. It protects the cranium when you fall off your horse, do you see.

PATCH. You're going to ride a horse as well?

SIMPKINS. Not necessarily. In fact most people who wear it will never have been on a horse in their lives.

PATCH. What about the stick, then? What's it got that bit of stuff round it for?

SIMPKINS. This is an umbrella. When opened it forms a canopy which protects one from the rain.

PATCH. Oh, that's useful.

SIMPKINS. Except that one never opens it.

PATCH. One doesn't?

SIMPKINS. Never.

PATCH. Why not, then?

SIMPKINS. It just isn't done, do you see.

PATCH. Oh. Tell me, where did you get all these ideas from? You were just an ordinary dog a few minutes ago, weren't you?

SIMPKINS. Have you ever heard of reincarnation?

PATCH. You mean hundreds of years ago I might have been a dog or a cat or the Queen of Sheba?

SIMPKINS. Yes. Well this is the opposite. It's retro-incarnation—I'm working backwards.

PATCH. I see. That is, I don't see at all. I think I'll drop the subject.

SIMPKINS. I think you're very wise, old chap.

PATCH. So you think I've only got three wishes. That Djinn fellow might have told me so before I started wishing.

SIMPKINS. Between you and me, old boy, I'd be careful how you go with that chap. Not our sort, I think. Slippery type, if you follow me.

PATCH. Oh, do you think so?

SIMPKINS. Certain of it. Those shoes, for one thing.

*(He shudders.)*

Frightful. One just doesn't wear things like that.

PATCH. No.

*(Looks doubtfully at his own.)*

Well I'm sure you know about these things. So you think I may have only one wish left?

SIMPKINS. I imagine so. And if I were you, old boy, I'd save it until I really needed it. Nothing like a bit of security, what?

PATCH. Yes, I think you're right, Simpkins. But I wish I—

SIMPKINS. Aha!—Careful, old boy.

PATCH. Thanks, Simpkins. I must watch that, mustn't I?—I know!

SIMPKINS. What?

PATCH. I'll get the Djinn back and ask him.

*(Patch stamps three times. The Djinn appears and bows.)*

DJINN. Command me, O Master!

PATCH. Simpkins seems to be of the opinion that you have not been altogether frank with us.

DJINN. Master?

PATCH. Now don't try to look innocent—You know what I'm talking about—the wishes. How many?

DJINN. Ah, the wishes. I crave your pardon, O Master. I must have omitted to mention that.

PATCH. Yes, and hoped I would use them all up before I realized what I was doing, and then you would be free of me all the sooner. Was that it?

DJINN *(Spreading his hands deprecatingly.)* Master!

PATCH. Well, how many?

DJINN. Shall we say—three?

PATCH. Are you asking me or telling me?

DJINN. Three is the customary number, Master.

PATCH. Right. So I have one left.

DJINN. One left, Master.

PATCH. Now then, I've been thinking about this wealth and power business. Why shouldn't I be rich and powerful as much as anyone else? Why shouldn't I be a king, even? Well, why shouldn't I?

SIMPKINS. Don't look at me, old boy; I'm not preventing you. Are you quite sure that's what you want?

PATCH. Yes, I am. I've been a servant of kings—they've laughed at me, whipped me, humiliated me, and then when they were tired of me, thrown me out to starve. It would be very sweet to be in their place for a change.

SIMPKINS. Not all kings are rich, though. There's some pretty impoverished royalty knocking about these days, you know.

PATCH. A good point, Simpkins. I must make sure I cover that in the wish, therefore—I wish to be King of the richest country there is!

DJINN. Yes, Master. To hear is to obey!

*(Thunder. The lights go down, leaving the Djinn in a single spot. He laughs, and then he too fades out of sight. When the light returns, the Djinn and the tree have both disappeared. In their place are two large banners, one either side upstage, striped hor-*

*izontally with the barry-nebuly pattern. Patch and Simpkins stand blinking in the middle.)*

PATCH. Mr. Simpkins.

SIMPKINS. Yes, old chap?

PATCH. We-er-we appear to be somewhere else.

SIMPKINS. It hadn't escaped my notice, old chap.

PATCH. I don't recognize it, do you?

SIMPKINS. I'm afraid I don't.

PATCH. I wonder where it is?

SIMPKINS. Can't say, I'm sure. Seems a rather nebulous sort of place to me.

*(A Herald appears from behind one of the banners, a self-important individual with flaxen hair and thin legs and carrying a trumpet.)*

HERALD. Exactly. You are now in the Province of Nebuly.

PATCH. Nebuly? I've never heard of it.

HERALD. Otherwise known as Square One.

PATCH. Square One?

HERALD. Haven't you heard of that, either?

PATCH. Not that I know of. How many squares are there?

HERALD. How many would you expect? Heraldia is parted quarterly, of course.

PATCH. Quarterly? You mean every three months?

HERALD. Of course not. Into four quarters, or squares.

PATCH. Oh.

HERALD *(Pointing out the quarters on his tabard.)* Square one is Nebuly, square two is Raguly, square three is Gobony—

PATCH. Did you say Gobony?

HERALD. Or Compony, if you prefer it.

PATCH. I'm not fussy.

HERALD. And finally Square Four, which is Flory Counterflory.

PATCH. Is it?

HERALD. Yes.

PATCH. Fancy.

HERALD. It is rather fancy for my taste, but then I didn't design it myself.

PATCH (*To Simpkins.*) Have you any idea what he's talking about?

SIMPKINS. Not altogether, old chap. Tell me, Mr.-er-what did you say your name was?

HERALD. Rougebucket Pursuivant, Herald Extraordinary.

PATCH. What's extraordinary about you?

HERALD. Well, I'm surplus to the establishment, do you see. As soon as my present job is finished, I shall revert.

PATCH. What will you revert to?

HERALD. To what I was before.

PATCH. Which was?

HERALD. Does it matter?

PATCH. Not really; I'm just curious.

HERALD. I was a gentleman's gentleman, if you must know. And I suppose I shall have to be one again after I've found the lost king.

SIMPKINS. Ah! Then it's your job to find a lost king?

HERALD. But of course. We have been without a king for fifteen years or more.

SIMPKINS. Ah!

HERALD. And for fifteen years I've had to trudge about interviewing people who think they have a claim to it; and they won't even let me have a horse allowance. Between you and me, I've hardly been statant for a minute, let alone sefant.

SIMPKINS. Then you need trudge no further, old chap. Your quest is over.

HERALD. I beg your pardon?

SIMPKINS. Here stands your future king.

HERALD. What, him?

SIMPKINS. None other.

HERALD. Oh no. This will be the tenth fruitless interview today.

SIMPKINS. Ah, but this one is different. This is your man, all right—specially recommended by a djinn.

HERALD. By a what?

SIMPKINS. A djinn.

HERALD. Is that a new kind of heraldic beast?