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IMAGINATION OVER KNOWLEDGE

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The Tin Woodman Of Oz: The Magic of a Yookooohoo (6/24)

Woot had seen very little of magic during his wanderings, while the Scarecrow and the Tin Woodman had seen a great deal of many sorts in their lives, yet all three were greatly impressed by Mrs. Yoop's powers. She did not affect any mysterious airs or indulge in chants or mystic rites, as most witches do, nor was the Giantess old and ugly or disagreeable in face or manner. Nevertheless, she frightened her prisoners more than any witch could have done.

"Please be seated," she said to them, as she sat herself down in a great arm-chair and spread her beautiful embroidered skirts for them to admire. But all the chairs in the room were so high that our friends could not climb to the seats of them. Mrs. Yoop observed this and waved her hand, when instantly a golden ladder appeared leaning against a chair opposite her own.

"Climb up," said she, and they obeyed, the Tin Man and the boy assisting the more clumsy Scarecrow. When they were all seated in a row on the cushion of the chair, the Giantess continued: "Now tell me how you happened to travel in this direction, and where you came from and what your errand is."

So the Tin Woodman told her all about Nimmie Amee, and how he had decided to find her and marry her,

although he had no Loving Heart. The story seemed to amuse the big woman, who then began to ask the Scarecrow questions and for the first time in her life heard of Ozma of Oz, and of Dorothy and Jack Pumpkinhead and Dr. Pipt and Tik-tok and many other Oz people who are well known in the Emerald City. Also Woot had to tell his story, which was very simple and did not take long. The Giantess laughed heartily when the boy related their adventure at Loonville, but said she knew nothing of the Loons because she never left her Valley.

"There are wicked people who would like to capture me, as they did my giant husband, Mr. Yoop," said she; "so I stay at home and mind my own business."

"If Ozma knew that you dared to work magic without her consent, she would punish you severely," declared the Scarecrow, "for this castle is in the Land of Oz, and no persons in the Land of Oz are permitted to work magic except Glinda the Good and the little Wizard who lives with Ozma in the Emerald City."

"That for your Ozma!" exclaimed the Giantess, snapping her fingers in derision. "What do I care for a girl whom I have never seen and who has never seen me?"

"But Ozma is a fairy," said the Tin Woodman, "and therefore she is very powerful. Also, we are under Ozma's protection, and to injure us in any way would make her extremely angry."

"What I do here, in my own private castle in this secluded Valley—where no one comes but fools like you—can never be known to your fairy Ozma," returned the

Giantess. "Do not seek to frighten me from my purpose, and do not allow yourselves to be frightened, for it is best to meet bravely what cannot be avoided. I am now going to bed, and in the morning I will give you all new forms, such as will be more interesting to me than the ones you now wear. Good night, and pleasant dreams." Saying this, Mrs. Yoop rose from her chair and walked through a doorway into another room. So heavy was the tread of the Giantess that even the walls of the big stone castle trembled as she stepped. She closed the door of her bedroom behind her, and then suddenly the light went out and the three prisoners found themselves in total darkness.

The Tin Woodman and the Scarecrow didn't mind the dark at all, but Woot the Wanderer felt worried to be left in this strange place in this strange manner, without being able to see any danger that might threaten.

"The big woman might have given me a bed, anyhow," he said to his companions, and scarcely had he spoken when he felt something press against his legs, which were then dangling from the seat of the chair. Leaning down, he put out his hand and found that a bedstead had appeared, with mattress, sheets and covers, all complete. He lost no time in slipping down upon the bed and was soon fast asleep.

During the night the Scarecrow and the Emperor talked in low tones together, and they got out of the chair and moved all about the room, feeling for some hidden spring that might open a door or window and permit them to escape.

Morning found them still unsuccessful in the quest and as soon as it was daylight Woot's bed suddenly disappeared, and he dropped to the floor with a thump that quickly wakened him. And after a time the Giantess came from her bedroom, wearing another dress that was quite as elaborate as the one in which she had been attired the evening before, and also wearing the pretty lace apron. Having seated herself in a chair, she said:

"I'm hungry; so I'll have breakfast at once."

She clapped her hands together and instantly the table appeared before her, spread with snowy linen and laden with golden dishes. But there was no food upon the table, nor anything else except a pitcher of water, a bundle of weeds and a handful of pebbles. But the Giantess poured some water into her coffee-pot, patted it once or twice with her hand, and then poured out a cupful of steaming hot coffee.

"Would you like some?" she asked Woot.

He was suspicious of magic coffee, but it smelled so good that he could not resist it; so he answered: "If you please, Madam."

The Giantess poured out another cup and set it on the floor for Woot. It was as big as a tub, and the golden spoon in the saucer beside the cup was so heavy the boy could scarcely lift it. But Woot managed to get a sip of the coffee and found it delicious.

Mrs. Yoop next transformed the weeds into a dish of oatmeal, which she ate with good appetite.

"Now, then," said she, picking up the pebbles, "I'm wondering whether I shall have fish-balls or lamb-chops to complete my meal. Which would you prefer, Woot the Wanderer?"

"If you please, I'll eat the food in my knapsack," answered the boy. "Your magic food might taste good, but I'm afraid of it."

The woman laughed at his fears and transformed the pebbles into fish-balls.



"I suppose you think that after you had eaten this food it would turn to stones again and make you sick," she remarked; "but that would be impossible. Nothing I transform ever gets back to its former shape again, so these fish-balls can never more be pebbles. That is why I have to be careful of my transformations," she added, busily eating while she talked, "for while I can change forms at will I can never change them back again—which proves that even the powers of a clever Yookoohoo are limited. When I have transformed you three people, you must always wear the shapes that I have given you."

"Then please don't transform us," begged Woot, "for we are quite satisfied to remain as we are."

"I am not expecting to satisfy you, but intend to please myself," she declared, "and my pleasure is to give you new shapes. For, if by chance your friends came in

search of you, not one of them would be able to recognize you."

Her tone was so positive that they knew it would be useless to protest. The woman was not unpleasant to look at; her face was not cruel; her voice was big but gracious in tone; but her words showed that she possessed a merciless heart and no pleadings would alter her wicked purpose.

Mrs. Yoop took ample time to finish her breakfast and the prisoners had no desire to hurry her, but finally the meal was concluded and she folded her napkin and made the table disappear by clapping her hands together. Then she turned to her captives and said: "The next thing on the programme is to change your forms."

"Have you decided what forms to give us?" asked the Scarecrow, uneasily.

"Yes; I dreamed it all out while I was asleep. This Tin Man seems a very solemn person"—indeed, the Tin Woodman was looking solemn, just then, for he was greatly disturbed—"so I shall change him into an Owl." All she did was to point one finger at him as she spoke, but immediately the form of the Tin Woodman began to change and in a few seconds Nick Chopper, the Emperor of the Winkies, had been transformed into an Owl, with eyes as big as saucers and a hooked beak and strong claws. But he was still tin. He was a Tin Owl, with tin legs and beak and eyes and feathers. When he flew to the back of a chair and perched upon it, his tin

feathers rattled against one another with a tinny clatter.

The Giantess seemed much amused by the Tin Owl's appearance, for her laugh was big and jolly.

"You're not liable to get lost," said she, "for your wings and feathers will make a racket wherever you go. And, on my word, a Tin Owl is so rare and pretty that it is an improvement on the ordinary bird. I did not intend to make you tin, but I forgot to wish you to be meat. However, tin you were, and tin you are, and as it's too late to change you, that settles it."

Until now the Scarecrow had rather doubted the possibility of Mrs. Yoop's being able to transform him, or his friend the Tin Woodman, for they were not made as ordinary people are. He had worried more over what might happen to Woot than to himself, but now he began to worry about himself.

"Madam," he said hastily, "I consider this action very impolite. It may even be called rude, considering we are your guests."

"You are not guests, for I did not invite you here," she replied.

"Perhaps not; but we craved hospitality. We threw ourselves upon your mercy, so to speak, and we now find you have no mercy. Therefore, if you will excuse the expression, I must say it is downright wicked to take our proper forms away from us and give us others that we do not care for."

"Are you trying to make me angry?" she asked, frowning.

"By no means," said the Scarecrow; "I'm just trying to make you act more ladylike."



"Oh, indeed! In my opinion, Mr. Scarecrow, you are now acting like a bear—so a Bear you shall be!"

Again the dreadful finger pointed, this time in the Scarecrow's direction, and

at once his form began to change. In a few seconds he had become a small Brown Bear, but he was stuffed with straw as he had been before, and when the little Brown Bear shuffled across the floor he was just as wobbly as the Scarecrow had been and moved just as awkwardly.

Woot was amazed, but he was also thoroughly frightened.

"Did it hurt?" he asked the little Brown Bear.

"No, of course not," growled the Scarecrow in the Bear's form; "but I don't like walking on four legs; it's undignified."

"Consider my humiliation!" chirped the Tin Owl, trying to settle its tin feathers smoothly with its tin beak.

"And I can't see very well, either. The light seems to hurt my eyes."

"That's because you are an Owl," said Woot. "I think you will see better in the dark."

"Well," remarked the Giantess, "I'm very well pleased with these new forms, for my part, and I'm sure you will like them better when you get used to them. So now," she added, turning to the boy, "it is your turn." "Don't you think you'd better leave me as I am?" asked Woot in a trembling voice.

"No," she replied, "I'm going to make a Monkey of you. I love monkeys—they're so cute!—and I think a Green Monkey will be lots of fun and amuse me when I am sad."

Woot shivered, for again the terrible magic finger pointed, and pointed directly his way. He felt himself changing; not so very much, however, and it didn't hurt him a bit. He looked down at his limbs and body and found that his clothes were gone and his skin covered with a fine, silk-like green fur. His hands and feet were now those of a monkey. He realized he really was a monkey, and his first feeling was one of anger. He began to chatter as monkeys do. He bounded to the seat of a giant chair, and then to its back and with a wild leap sprang upon the laughing Giantess. His idea was to seize her hair and pull it out by the roots, and so have revenge for her wicked transformations. But she raised her hand and said:

"Gently, my dear Monkey—gently! You're not angry; you're happy as can be!"

Woot stopped short. No; he wasn't a bit angry now; he felt as good-humored and gay as ever he did when a boy. Instead of pulling Mrs. Yoop's hair, he perched on her shoulder and smoothed her soft cheek with his

hairy paw. In return, she smiled at the funny green animal and patted his head.

"Very good," said the Giantess. "Let us all become friends and be happy together. How is my Tin Owl feeling?"

"Quite comfortable," said the Owl. "I don't like it, to be sure, but I'm not going to allow my new form to make me unhappy. But, tell me, please: What is a Tin Owl good for?"

"You are only good to make me laugh," replied the Giantess.

"Will a stuffed Bear also make you laugh?" inquired the Scarecrow, sitting back on his haunches to look up at her.

"Of course," declared the Giantess; "and I have added a little magic to your transformations to make you all contented with wearing your new forms. I'm sorry I didn't think to do that when I transformed Polychrome into a Canary-Bird. But perhaps, when she sees how cheerful you are, she will cease to be silent and sullen and take to singing. I will go get the bird and let you see her."

With this, Mrs. Yoop went into the next room and soon returned bearing a golden cage in which sat upon a swinging perch a lovely yellow Canary.



"Polychrome," said the Giantess, "permit me to introduce to you a Green Monkey, which used to be a boy called Woot the Wanderer, and a Tin Owl, which used to be a Tin Woodman named Nick Chopper, and a straw-stuffed little Brown Bear which used to be a live Scarecrow."

"We already know one another," declared the Scarecrow. "The bird is Polychrome, the Rainbow's Daughter, and she and I used to be good friends."

"Are you really my old friend, the Scarecrow?" asked the bird, in a sweet, low voice.

"There!" cried Mrs. Yoop; "that's the first time she has spoken since she was transformed."

"I am really your old friend," answered the Scarecrow; "but you must pardon me for appearing just now in this brutal form."

"I am a bird, as you are, dear Poly," said the Tin Woodman; "but, alas! a Tin Owl is not as beautiful as a Canary-Bird."

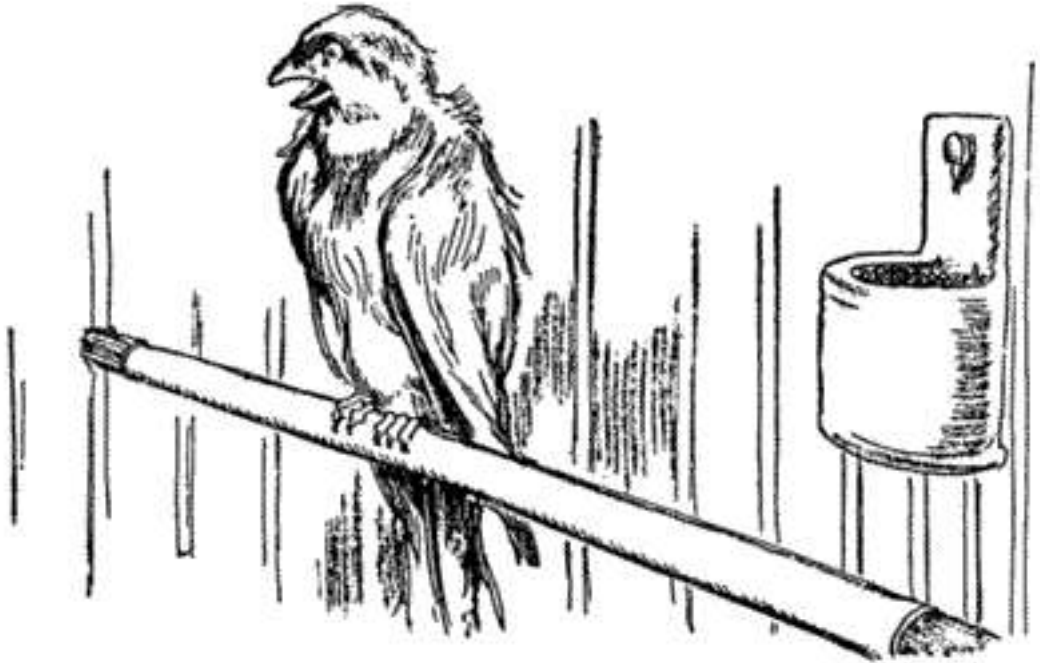
"How dreadful it all is!" sighed the Canary. "Couldn't you manage to escape from this terrible Yookoohoo?"

"No," answered the Scarecrow, "we tried to escape, but failed. She first made us her prisoners and then transformed us. But how did she manage to get you, Polychrome?"

"I was asleep, and she took unfair advantage of me," answered the bird sadly. "Had I been awake, I could easily have protected myself."

"Tell me," said the Green Monkey earnestly, as he came close to the cage, "what must we do, Daughter of the

Rainbow, to escape from these transformations? Can't you help us, being a Fairy?"



"At present I am powerless to help even myself," replied the Canary.

"That's the exact truth!" exclaimed the Giantess, who seemed pleased to hear the bird talk, even though it complained; "you are all helpless and in my power, so you may as well make up your minds to accept your fate and be content. Remember that you are transformed for good, since no magic on earth can break your enchantments. I am now going out for my morning walk, for each day after breakfast I walk sixteen times around my castle for exercise. Amuse yourselves while I am gone, and when I return I hope to find you all reconciled and happy."

So the Giantess walked to the door by which our friends had entered the great hall and spoke one word: "Open!" Then the door swung open and after Mrs. Yoop had passed out it closed again with a snap as its powerful bolts shot into place. The Green Monkey had rushed toward the opening, hoping to escape, but he was too late and only got a bump on his nose as the door slammed shut.