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IMAGINATION OVER KNOWLEDGE

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# Ozoplaning with the Wizard of Oz: At Home with the Wizard of Oz (1/20)

In his big brightly lighted laboratory back of the throne room, the Wizard of Oz paced impatiently forth and back, his hands clasped tightly behind him. Every minute or two he would glance at the clock or dart over to peer out to the already darkening garden.

"Are you sure you told them all, Jellia? Are you sure you told them tonight?" he asked, turning to the pretty little serving maid who was setting a table near the fire, for the fall evening was quite cool and frosty.



"Four—five—six—seven—." Jellia, counting places, nodded her head firmly to answer the Wizard's

question, then stepped back to regard her handiwork with complete satisfaction. "Oh, doesn't that tiny house in the center look too cute and cunningish? Real smoke coming out of the chimney, too. How ever did you manage it, Wiz? And having those silver slippers at each place for nuts and candies is just, plain beautiful."

"Do you really think so?" The little Wizard positively blushed with pleasure. "Well, ye see, Jellia, this party is

to celebrate Dorothy's first trip to the Emerald City. That is an exact model of the house in which she blew from Kansas to Oz in a cyclone, the house that fell on the wicked witch of the West and destroyed her—all but her silver slippers. Remember?"

"Ho, everybody remembers that," said Jellia with a toss of her head that set all her green cap ribbons fluttering. "If I live to be a million, I'll never forget the day she came to this castle with the Cowardly Lion, the Scarecrow and the Tin Woodman. Not if I live to be a million! Will I light the candles now, Wiz dear, or wait until they arrive?"

"Oh, wait till they arrive, by all means. But see here," the Wizard taking a last look at the party table was plainly distressed. "You've only seven places, Jellia, and there are eight of us. My idea was to have everyone immediately associated with Dorothy's first visit, and that would be, one—Dorothy herself; two—myself; three—yourself; four—the Cowardly Lion; five—the Scarecrow; six—the Tin Woodman; seven—the Soldier with Green

Whiskers, and eight—the Guardian of the Gate. Quick, my dear!

Another plate for the Guardian of the Gate."



"He's not coming," announced Jellia primly. "He says he has not

deserted his post for forty years and does not intend to desert it now. But if you'll send his refreshments to the

Guard House, he'll take it very kindly. I've already fixed him a basket," said Jellia, smoothing her apron.

"Good old Guardy!" The Wizard absently brushed back the hair he no longer had, then, hearing voices and steps in the corridor, bounced over to open the door while Jellia tripped joyously about, lighting the candles set everywhere in the big work shop. Candle and fire light are much cozier for parties, and it all looked so cheery and gay that Dorothy, who was first, stopped short in the doorway with an exclamation of delight.



"Oh, Wizard! How beautiful! Oh, how I do wish Ozma could see it all!"

"Tut tut!" chuckled the Wizard, leading her into the room. "Ozma is having a fine time in Glinda's palace, by now. To tell the truth, Dorothy, this party is just for YOU and to remind us all of the old Oz days when—" "—You were nothing but a humbug," snorted the Scarecrow, laughing so hard he had to lean against the door jam.

"Don't forget he gave you your famous brains, friend." The Tin Woodman spoke reprovingly, for Nick Chopper did not like anyone's feelings to be hurt, even in fun.

"And don't forget he gave me my splendid heart!"

"And me, my grade A, double distilled, instant acting courage," purred the Cowardly Lion. Moving over to the

fire, the big beast stretched himself luxuriously on the hearth rug.

"And don't forget our little Wiz was once Supreme Ruler of Oz!" boomed the Soldier with Green Whiskers. Marching three times round the party table the thin, immensely tall soldier brought up with a smart salute before their embarrassed little host.

"Three cheers for the Wizard of Oz!" cried Jellia Jam. Seizing a silver bell with an emerald clapper, she rang it so hard the Cowardly Lion's mane blew straight back and even the candles flickered.

"Thank you! Thank you very much!" The Wizard bowed and rubbed his ear which still tingled from the cheers and bell ringing. "But where is Toto, Dorothy? I thought of course you'd bring your little dog."

"Oh, Toto's with Ozma," explained Dorothy, drawn in spite of herself to the brightly decorated party table.

"You know how he dotes on travelling, so Ozma took him along for company."

"Then of course he cannot be here?" sighed the Wizard regretfully. "Now Jellia, off with that cap and apron. Tonight you are my guest and not a maid in waiting to Ozma or anyone else. Besides, I've asked Fredjon to serve the supper. Dorothy, suppose you sit at the head. I'll sit at the foot and the others may find their own places."

"My place will always be next to little Dorothy," rumbled the Cowardly Lion, hoisting himself sleepily to the chair beside the little girl.

"Mine will be next to the pickles. MM-mmmm! I LOVE pickles," said the soldier, slipping into the seat next to the lion, while Jellia, with a purposeful bounce, settled near a plate of green cookies. There was no doubt where the Tin Woodman and Scarecrow would sit, for at one plate the Wizard had put a silver box of metal polish and an emerald bottle containing purest oil. Then, instead of a chair, he had provided a bale of freshly packed straw for the Scarecrow.

"Well, well, here we all are!" Rubbing his hands briskly the Wizard beamed on his guests as Fredjon, wearing his best suit of green and silver, bustled in with the first course.

"And isn't it fun to be here?" Dorothy took a long, satisfying sip of her Ozade. "I'm awfully glad I came back to live in the Land of Oz. Aren't you, Wizard?"



"A country where a body grows no older, where animals talk as easily as men and where the practice of magic is not only possible but practical—a country like that has many advantages," admitted the Wizard, winking at the Cowardly Lion who was drinking his fruit juice in a refined way from a huge, green aquarium. "I, myself, never have regretted the years spent in this marvelous fairy land. Sometimes I hardly can believe I ever did live in Omaha, or travel through the West with a circus."

"I know," agreed Dorothy, nodding her head slowly.

"Kansas, when I think of it, seems very far away—as much like a dream, I suppose, as Oz seems like a dream to boys and girls in Kansas who read Oz history."

"Oh, why think of Kansas?" Jellia spoke scornfully. "In Kansas you were only an ordinary little girl, while here you are a Princess and second in importance to our Ruler, Ozma herself."



"And in Kansas," observed the Scarecrow, as Dorothy rather self-consciously straightened

her crown, "I'll bet you never had as much fun nor as many adventures as we have here." The Scarecrow, being well stuffed with straw, never indulged in any refreshments. In fact, he just came to parties for the conversation, and to be sure of a good time he tried to do all the talking himself.

"That's right," said Dorothy thoughtfully, "That cyclone was about the only thing that ever happened in Kansas."

"A great blow to you, my dear, but a fortunate thing for Nick and me." The Scarecrow patted the Tin Woodman affectionately on the funnel he wore for a hat. "If you had not blown to Oz, I'd probably still be hanging on a pole in that cornfield and Nick would be rusting away his life in the greenwood."

"And in some ways," mused Dorothy, looking dreamily at the model of her small Kansas house, "in some ways

that first adventure always will seem best. Just imagine how surprised I was to blow all those miles and find myself in a strange, wonderful country like Oz. The Munchkins thought I was a sorceress because my house had killed the wicked witch of the East. Then, the Good Witch of the North told me to put on her silver shoes and go to the Emerald City to ask the great OZ to send me home. And on the way I discovered you, and do you remember how astonished I was when I lifted you down from your pole and found you really were alive and could talk?"

The Scarecrow nodded cheerfully.

"And remember how we travelled on together till we found the Tin Woodman?" went on Dorothy. "And Nick told us about the witch who had enchanted his axe so that it chopped off a leg here, and an arm there, and finally his head and body, too. And after each accident he'd go to a tinsmith who made him new tin arms and legs and finally even a body and a head. You didn't mind being Tin at all, did you, Nick? Except that day you went out to chop wood and left your oil can at home. Then that storm came up, your joints rusted and you couldn't move, and there you had been—rusting and helpless for months!"

"But we hustled back to your hut, fetched the oil can and fixed you up in fine shape, didn't we, old fellow?"

The Scarecrow flung his flimsy arm around Nick Chopper's shoulder and the Tin Woodman, at the mere mention of rust, uncorked the emerald bottle and let three drops of oil slide down his neck.



"I never shall forget your kindness," he told them earnestly, turning his head first to look at Dorothy and then at the Scarecrow.



"And after that, you came along so the Wizard could give you a new heart," Dorothy reminded him gaily.

"And right afterwards, we met the Cowardly Lion."

"And he was more afraid of us than we were of him," teased the Scarecrow, leaning across the table to give the lion a poke.

"Yes, I was just a big coward in those days," admitted the lion, blinking approvingly at the rare roast Fredjon had brought him instead of the chicken he was serving the others. "Just a great, big coward! Ho hum!"

"But not too cowardly to fight for us," said Dorothy, taking quick little bites of her biscuit, "and to come with us to the Emerald City."

"Oh, that was because I wanted the Wizard to give me some courage," roared the lion. "And weren't we surprised when we did reach the Emerald City to find it all built of green marble, studded with real emeralds! And remember how the Guardian of the Gate gave us all green specs, even me, and then led us up to the palace?"

"You looked awfully funny in those specs!" laughed Dorothy. "I'll never forget how funny!"

"But remember, it was I who carried your messages to Oz," put in the Soldier with Green Whiskers.

"Of course it was," said Dorothy nodding her head quickly. "You gave us some splendid advice, Soldier, and Jellia showed us to the grandest rooms in the castle and loaned me the loveliest dresses to wear."

"I liked you from the very first!" declared Jellia, choking a bit on her seventh cookie.

"But Old Man Wizzy wouldn't give us a thing!" said the Scarecrow, waving his napkin toward the head of the table. "He told us we'd have to kill the Witch of the West before he'd send Dorothy home or grant any of our requests."

"But, you see—I didn't know any real magic then." The Wizard looked quite unhappy for he did not like to remember the time before he was a real Wizard. "And besides, I needed more time."



"Ho ho! You were doing very well for yourself!" chuckled the Scarecrow, "living in a splendid castle and having the whole country eating out of your hand. As it happened, we did kill the witch of the West, or at least Dorothy melted her with a bucket of water and the Winkies were so tickled they gave us all presents and made Nick their Emperor. So when we got back at last, you did give me some brand new brains, and Nick a red plush heart—"

"And me some real red, true-blue courage," grinned the Cowardly Lion, wiping his mouth delicately with the tip of his tail.

"And you made me Ruler of OZ! Ah!—My Majesty the Scarecrow, Hah—those were the days!" The Scarecrow thumped his pudgy chest and fairly glowed, at the memory.

"You would have taken me back to Kansas, too, only your balloon flew away too fast, didn't it?" Dorothy leaned all the way across the table to pat the Wizard's arm.

"But don't forget it was I, who told you to go to the palace of Glinda, the Good Sorceress of the South," interrupted the Soldier with Green Whiskers again.

"So we all went to Glinda's," rumbled the Cowardly Lion, half closing his eyes. "And Glinda told Dorothy the

Witch's silver shoes would carry her home and—they did!" There was a little silence following the lion's last sentence, as if all of Dorothy's friends were recalling their sorrow at that first parting from their cheerful little comrade.



"But you soon came back," declared the Scarecrow, balancing a fork on the edge of his tumbler. "And so did our little Wizard."

"Well, to tell the truth, Omaha seemed rather dull after the Emerald City," admitted the Wizard, motioning

for Fredjon to bring on the dessert. This caused many admiring "Oh's" and "Ah's" when it arrived, for it was ice cream moulded into small Tin Woodmen, Scarecrows, Lions and all the other guests. Then, out of a huge, frosted cake the footman set down before Dorothy, flew four little witches riding green broom sticks, straight into the fire.

"I tell you it takes a real Wizard to perform a trick like that." Nick Chopper wagged his head solemnly. "You certainly have made progress since Ozma made you Chief Magician of the Realm."

"Well—" drawled the Wizard, pushing the pickle dish away from the Soldier with Green Whiskers who already had eaten twenty-seven and was looking rather dill. "Magic is like any other science—it takes practice. Of course, if you are a born fairy like Ozma and the former rulers of Oz, working spells and charms just comes natural—like playing the piano by ear. But if you are not a Fairy, you must study witchcraft and sorcery as I have done with Glinda the Good. It only has been by continuous study and research that I have managed to perfect myself in the arts of wizardry."

"Well, how is wizness lately?" inquired the Scarecrow, wrinkling his cotton forehead at all the big words.

"Fine, just fine!" The Wizard assured him brightly. Marching over to his desk, he returned with a long, tube-like object resembling a seaman's spy glass. "This is one of my latest inventions," he confessed modestly.

"Here, take a look." Beaming with anticipation, he pressed the spy glass into Dorothy's hands.