

This story is brought to you by Ririro.com for free. Our mission is to give all children in the world free access to a variety of stories. The stories can be read, downloaded and printed online and cover a wide range of topics, including animals, fantasy, science, history, diverse cultures and much more.

Support our mission by sharing our website. We wish you a lot of fun reading!



Ririro

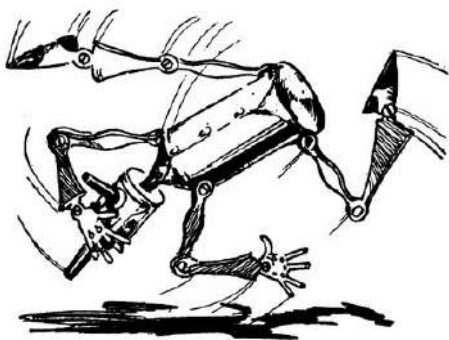
IMAGINATION OVER KNOWLEDGE

Ririro

Ozoplaning with the Wizard of Oz: First Flight of the Oztober (4/20)

Now the start of the Oztober had been nothing like the orderly take-off of the Ozpril. The first hint Jellia had of their departure was when a china coffee pot from the open china closet into which she was looking with great interest, hit her a sharp clip on the chin. Next moment she was rolling round on the floor of the cabin, dodging all the rest of the green dishes.

"Oh! Oh! Dishes awful!" choked poor Jellia Jam, not even realizing she was making a pun. "Stop!" yelled the Tin Woodman,



turning a complete somersault and coming down on his funnel with one leg hooked through the luggage rack. "Stop! Who did that?"

"Pickles!" moaned a faint voice from the forward end of the cabin, "Oh, those pickles!" And that was probably as



correct an answer as any to Nick's indignant question. Even upside down as he was, and subject to the fierce rocketing of the plane, the Tin Woodman could see a tall, green figure sprawled across the navigator's table. As he had bent over to examine the Oztober's steering apparatus, the Soldier with Green Whiskers had been taken with a violent cramp from the twenty-nine pickles he had eaten at the party. Falling heavily on the board he had pushed down ten of the Wizard's bright colored buttons. Following the directions of all ten, one after the other, the Oztober had exploded into the air and now, whistling and whirling like a comet bound for Mars, was charging into the Heavens.

Jellia Jam was too bruised and shaken to do anything but cling to the side of one of the seats. The Soldier, after his head had been whacked down three times on the board had lapsed into complete and utter silence. Only Nick managed to preserve a semblance of his usual calm and composure. Though severely dented by the plane's take-off, the Tin Woodman, being of metal, felt no pain. Nor was he subject to the giddiness that assailed ordinary flesh and bone bodies under such trying conditions. Even standing on his head did not greatly inconvenience him, and after the first dreadful shock, he began to perceive a certain order and rhythm in their flight. This was not strange.

The Soldier's fall had pressed down the button to inflate the Oztober's balloon, the "Up" and the "South" buttons, the "fast," "spin," "spiral," "zig," "zag," "slow" and "circle" buttons as well. So first, the Oztober would

shoot up, then it would go into a fast spin, and spiral. The zigs and zags were a little less terrible, and on one of the slow circles, the Tin Woodman managed to extricate his foot from the luggage rack. Clattering full length in the aisle, he lay still, till the next slow circle. Then, leaping to his feet, he rushed forward and pulled the soldier off the steering board. He had just time to prop the unconscious army into the third chair, and fall into the pilot's seat himself, when the Oztober went into another fast spin and spiral. This rather upset Nick. He had taken a hasty look at the navigator's table when he entered the ship and then, more interested in the metal of which the plane was constructed, had gone tapping about, testing it with his tin knuckles—intending to return to the steering gear later. He naturally had supposed that when he pulled the soldier off the board the plane would slow down or change its course. But nothing of the kind happened. All the buttons the soldier had fallen on stayed down. Grasping the wheel, Nick was relieved to find he could steady the Oztober a bit in this way. Holding to it with one hand, he tried to pull out the "spin" and "spiral" buttons with the other. But even his strong tin fingers could not budge them. Next, he glanced frantically over the board for a "stop" or a "down" button, but the "down" button when he found it, filled him with apprehension. If they shot down at the speed they were hurling upward, the plane most certainly would be wrecked. No, decided Nick, drawing his fingers hastily back from the "down" button—they were much safer in the air until he learned a little

more about flying, and he'd just have to hang on till he discovered how the Ozoplane worked.



Grasping the wheel resignedly in both hands, he glanced back to see how Jellia was faring. Jellia was sitting dizzily in the middle of the aisle. But she was so encouraged to see Nick actually at the wheel, that she made her way to him and hung firmly to the arm of his chair. Just then, the Oztober whirled into its twentieth spin and spiral, and Jellia—dislodged from the chair—caught at the steering table to save herself from falling.

"Oh, now you've done it!" gasped Nick, as the Oztober gave a wicked lurch. "Oh, now—" His voice trailed off into a hoarse squeak, for, as abruptly as it had started, the plane stopped, and, held aloft by its still buoyant balloon, swung easily to and fro in the faint wind that stirred above the clouds. "Say! how did you do it?" Letting go the wheel, the Tin Woodman seized Jellia by the shoulders.

"What?" panted Jellia. "What did I do?"

"Why, you saved the ship. You stopped her. See, all the buttons are up again!" Removing Jellia's clutching fingers gently from the table top, Nick discovered a flat bar on the under side of the board. As soon as Jellia pressed the bar, all the buttons had popped back to their normal position. "So THAT'S it!" exclaimed Nick,

rubbing his tin forehead anxiously. "Each time you want to change the course, you press this bar and then begin all over again."

"But now we're sinking," groaned Jellia. And sinking herself, into the seat back of Nick, she stared at him with round, desperate eyes.



"Sinking, are we? Well, I'll soon put a stop to that!" Pouncing on the green button to inflate the Oztober's gas

bag, Nick pressed it quickly, for of course, as soon as Jellia had touched the bar, the buttons all had sprung up and the magic gas had begun to seep out of the plane's balloon attachment. As it again filled and became taut, the slow downward drift of the ship ceased, and again it hung motionless between a cloud and a star.

"Now!" breathed the Tin Woodman eyeing the button board with grim purpose and determination, "Now we can take our time and start off right."

"Oh, Nick! Must we go through all that again?" Jellia began to cry softly, drying her eyes on the sash of her party dress. "Oh, Nick, I never thought flying would be like this. Please can't we just stay as we are?"

"Certainly not," said the Tin Woodman briskly. "Hanging 'round the sky is dangerous. We might be hit by a shooting star or even by a meteor. Now, just trust yourself to me, my dear Jellia. Remember I am the Emperor of the East!" Nick smote his tin chest a

resounding blow. "And after ruling the Winkies all these years, I surely can handle one small plane!"

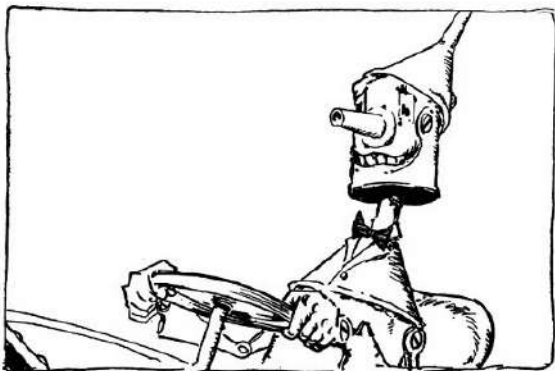
Reassuring himself, if not Jellia, the Tin Woodman searched the array of buttons for one marked "slow." After he had found it, he slowly began to map his course. He would continue to fly up, for a time. Next he would take a horizontal direction until he grew more accustomed to piloting the Ozoplane.

Then, as night passed and the sun rose, he would zig and zag slowly downward and make a safe landing near the Emerald City.



The Soldier with Green Whiskers had regained consciousness, only to fall at once into a heavy slumber. His snores blended nicely with Jellia's sobs, as Nick Chopper pushed the "up," the "South" and the "slow" buttons. Braced for a new shock, Jellia grasped the arms of her seat. But this time the Oztober soared gently and gracefully aloft, the motion of the plane so smooth and pleasant, Ozma's little Maid in Waiting soon forgot all her fears. Relaxing against the soft green cushions, she, too, fell asleep. This left only Nick awake and alert. But if the Wizard had searched all over Oz, he could not have found a better pilot than the Tin Woodman. Being practically tireless and requiring neither food nor rest, he could keep his place at the wheel for days if necessary. Delighted at the way the Oztober responded to his

clever manipulation of the wheel and buttons, he flew up and up and on and on, scarcely realizing the distance he was putting between himself and Oz. Glancing out the round window beside him, Nick viewed the starry expanse of the upper air with growing interest and enthusiasm. Sometimes he was almost tempted to waken Jellia to point out the splendid cloud mountains and cities they were passing. As he swept along, the sky turned from deep blue to grey and was now suffused with the rainbow tints of early morning. Switching off the lights, the Tin Woodman slightly changed his course. "I really need a lot more practice before I go back or try to make a safe landing," he observed softly to himself. "It never would do to crack up a valuable ship like this." But the truth of the matter was, the Tin Woodman did not wish to turn back. And after all—who was to insist? The Soldier and Jellia still slept on, and far ahead, between a bank of fog and an arch of platinum sun rays, loomed a long, lavender crescent.



Nick even fancied he could see people moving about its glittering surface.

"A new world!" gloated the Tin Woodman, setting his funnel at a more daring angle. If this were so, he

would be its discoverer. Not only that, but he could claim it for Ozma and win for himself as much honor and renown as Samuel Salt, the Royal Explorer of Oz.

"Even if it's not inhabited, it would be a good place to practice landing," reflected Nick happily. So again he pressed the black bar, touched the button to deflate the Oztober's balloon and raise the wings. For now he wished to fly horizontally, and the wings would be faster than the gas bag. Next, touching the "straight-on" and "faster" buttons, and twirling the wheel expertly, he headed the ship straight for the tip of the lavender island.