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IMAGINATION OVER KNOWLEDGE

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# Ozoplaning with the Wizard of Oz: The Wizard Gets to Work (17/20)

"Please announce us to your Mistress at once!" directed the Wizard to the sleepy little castle-maid who presently came, in answer to his loud knock.

"But Her Highness and Princess Ozma are not here!" stuttered the maid, her eyes popping at sight of visitors so early in the morning. "They left yesterday to visit Prince Tatters and Grampa in Ragbad!"



"Ha, well," the Wizard turned to the others with a little shrug. "Looks as if I shall have to manage alone. A fortunate thing Ozma did not start back to the Emerald City. At least she will not fall into Strut's hands. Here, HERE! Don't shut the door!" The Wizard quickly pushed past the little serving maid.

"Glinda will wish us to make ourselves comfortable in her absence. Now then, Miss—Miss—?" "Greta," mumbled the girl, looking bashfully at her feet.



"Oho—a Greta to greet, eh?" chuckled the Scarecrow, taking off his hat and bowing to the ground. "Well, now, my dear Miss Greta, will you kindly show these young ladies to suitable apartments, and tell the cook to prepare breakfast for six."

"Make it twelve!" growled the Cowardly Lion, with a little bounce toward the maid. "I could eat six all by myself!"

"Yes Sirs! Yes Sirs!" quavered Greta, running off so fast she lost one of her red slippers.

"Never mind," laughed Dorothy. "Jellia and I know this castle as well as our own. We'll show Azarine about and have time for a short nap before breakfast." The hundred pretty girls who acted as Glinda's Maids in Waiting were still asleep. In fact no one was stirring in the castle except a few servants. Waving briskly to the girls as they started up the marble stairway, the Wizard went striding toward the red study where the Sorceress kept all her books on witchcraft, her magic potions, her phials and appliances.

The exquisite palace of Glinda, over which Azarine was exclaiming at every step, was an old story to the Cowardly Lion. Throwing himself down on a huge bearskin, he soon was in a doze and making up the sleep he had lost on the two, previous nights. Wantowin Battles had at once gone off to waken an old Soldier Crony of his who drilled Glinda's Girl Guard, and the Scarecrow, about to follow the Wizard into the study, paused to look at the great record book.

This book, fastened with golden chains to a marble table in the reception room of the castle, records each event as it happens, in the Land of Oz. When Glinda goes on a journey, she usually locks the Record book and takes the key with her. But this time, she had neglected to do so, and sentences were popping up, row after row on the open pages. As he bent over to peruse the latest entry, the Scarecrow's painted blue eyes almost popped from his cotton head.



"Fierce Airlanders from the Upper Strat are descending on the Emerald City of Oz," read the Straw Man, nearly losing his balance. "If measures of defense are not taken at once, the capitol will fall under the fierce attack of the invaders!"

"Wiz! YO, WIZ!" yelled the Scarecrow, taking a furious slide into the study. "Hurry! HURRY! For the love of Oz, hurry—or Strut will blow Ozma's castle into the Strat! The Record Book says so!" he panted, grabbing the Wizard's arm to steady himself. The



Wizard, working over the delicate apparatus on a long table, looked up with an anxious frown.

"Now, now, you must be a little patient," he told the Scarecrow, earnestly. "I'm hurrying just as fast as ever I can."

"But what do you propose to do?" demanded the Scarecrow, puckering his forehead into almost forty deep wrinkles. "Can't you whiz these Stratovanians away, or send them back where they came from?"

"Not without Ozma's magic belt," sighed the Wizard.

"And you know perfectly well that the belt is back in the Emerald safe in the castle!"

"Then can't you transport the safe here?" asked the Scarecrow, playing a frantic little tune on the edge of the table.

"Just what I'm trying to do!" admitted the Wizard, turning a lever here and a wheel there. "But this triple-edged, zentomatic transporter of Glinda's does not seem to be working as it should. I'll probably be able to fix it in a little while, but meantime—I tell you what you can do. Post yourself beside that record book and the minute it announces Strut's arrival in the Emerald City, rush straight back here to me!"

Before he had finished his sentence the Scarecrow was gone, and for the next two hours the faithful Straw Man, without once lifting his eyes, bent over the great book of records, reading with tense interest and lively apprehension of the progress of the Oztober and the Airlanders toward the Capitol of Oz.