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IMAGINATION OVER KNOWLEDGE

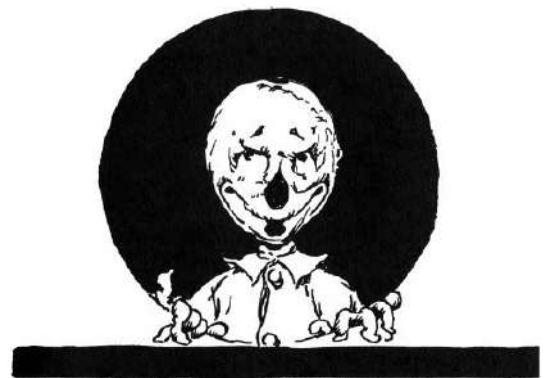
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Ozoplaning with the Wizard of Oz: The Wizard in Stratovania! (10/20)

It was indeed the Ozpril, just as the Soldier with Green Whiskers had said. Even at a distance, Jellia could spell out the name on the gleaming body and, as the silvery plane came swooping toward them, she could not repress a shout of joy.

Too exhausted by the dreadful ordeal she had just been through to run to meet the ship, she jerked off her scarf and waved it wildly over her head.

About ten feet from the crystal boulder on which she had been sitting, the Ozpril came to a gentle and perfect landing. Scarcely had the whirr and sputter of its engine died away before the door of the cabin burst open and down climbed the little Wizard of Oz, followed by Dorothy and the Scarecrow. The Cowardly Lion, last of all, had difficulty fitting his paws on the rungs and, after a trembling descent, rolled over on his back, his four feet straight up in the air. The trip had



not agreed with the Cowardly Lion at all. Weak and dizzy, he made no attempt to rise.



"Here you are at last!" cried the Wizard happily, rushing over to Jellia and seizing both of her hands. "So THIS is where you've been! Well I must say it's a fine

place. Why it's beautiful, beautiful!" Swinging round so he could look in all directions, the Wizard positively glowed with interest and enthusiasm.

"What's so beautiful about it?" growled the lion without turning over. "Is there any grass? Are there any trees? Is there anything to eat?" Dorothy, on the point of embracing Jellia, gave a little scream, for the Tell-all-escape, which she had picked up just before leaving the plane, was making terse announcements. At this point it happened to be pointed at Jellia. Clearing its throat it remarked in a superior way: "You are now looking at Miss Jellia Jam, formerly of Oz, at present new Starina of the Strat, by edict of Strutoovious the Seventh. Miss Jellia Jam, Starina of Stratovania! Period! Stop, drop or point elsewhere!"

"Why, Jellia!" gasped Dorothy, letting the Tell-all-escape fall with a crash, "are you, really? Oh my! I don't suppose you'll ever want to return to Oz, now. Why, you must be having a wonderful time!"

"Humph!" sniffed Jellia, with a slightly wan smile. "If being pinched, chased and nearly blown to atoms is

having a wonderful time, then I guess I've been having it all right!"

"Tell me," requested the Scarecrow, who had been walking in a slow circle around Jellia. "Does one prostrate oneself before a Starina, or does one merely kiss her hand?"



"Neither," laughed Jellia. Jumping up she gave the Scarecrow such a hug he was out of shape for hours. "But quick!—Let's all hop in the Ozpril and fly away before something terrible happens."

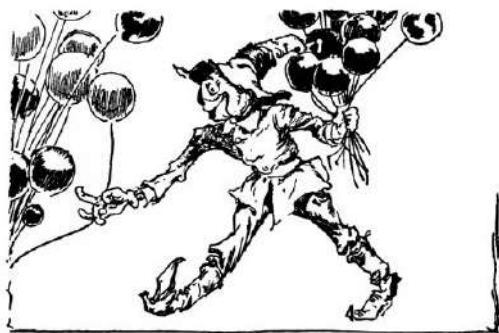
"Fly away?" cried the Wizard, shoving back his high hat. "But, my dear—we've only just come! I've been flying all night and need a little rest and refreshment before we start off again. Besides, I would like to see more of this interesting airland and its people, and add to my data on the Strata."

"That's what Nick thought," observed Jellia, putting both hands on her hips. "And look what happened to him!"

"What did happen to him?" demanded the Wizard, realizing for the first time that Nick was not among those present.

"You tell him," sighed Jellia to the Soldier. Sinking back on the boulder she held her aching head in both hands. All eyes turned toward the Soldier with Green Whiskers who opened and closed his mouth several times without saying a word. The Wizard, now

thoroughly alarmed, began shaking him on one side and the Scarecrow on the other, until finally Wantowin took a tremendous swallow and gave them the whole story. When the narrator reached the part where Strut had ordered Nick and him blown away, the Scarecrow hurried over to the balloon bush and began picking the almost ripe balloons as fast as his clumsy cotton fingers would permit. Not till he had about twenty did he even pause. So light and flimsy was the straw man that the bunch of balloons on their long stems kept jerking him



into the air. After each jerk he would give a little grunt of satisfaction.

"These are just to keep me aloft—in case of accidents," he explained hastily to Dorothy who was watching him intently.

"But what of us?" asked the little girl, looking anxiously toward the Canopied City which, at present, seemed absolutely deserted.

"You say that this wretched Strut, after naming Jellia Starina, forced Nick to fly him to Oz?" exclaimed the Wizard, grasping Wantowin Battles by both arms and gazing into his face.

"Not only that," Wantowin told him hoarsely, "but he's taken his Blowmen and a thousand fighting men to conquer the country! He intends to bring back Ozma's crown, scepter, jewels and all the treasures in our castle!" finished the Soldier, dolefully.

"Oh, can't we do something Wizard?" cried Jellia determinedly. "I simply won't be Starina! I won't! I WON'T!"

"Just the same—you make a very pretty one," murmured the Scarecrow, patting the little Oz Maid consolingly on the shoulder. "But of course, we cannot allow this bounding airlander to take Oz!"

"If Nick had not 'taken possession' of Stratovania for Ozma, he'd never have thought of it," groaned Jellia. Rising stiffly, she picked up the kit-bag from the crystal rock beside her.

"Ah—so you still have my magic kitty!" In spite of his anxiety the Wizard smiled.

"Indeed I have," said Jellia firmly. "It saved us from being blown away. I used some of your cheer gas, Wiz, but I didn't have time to try out any of the other magic. Here, you'd better take it now and do let's be starting. No telling when Kabebe and those three Blowmen will be coming back."

"Forward march! Forward march!" Wantowin Battles started off all by himself for the Ozpril. "Hurry, hurry!" he called over his shoulder. "If those fearful people return they'll surely make trouble!" yelled the Soldier, his voice growing more emphatic.

"Well, it's certainly a mix-up," said Dorothy, moving closer to the Wizard.

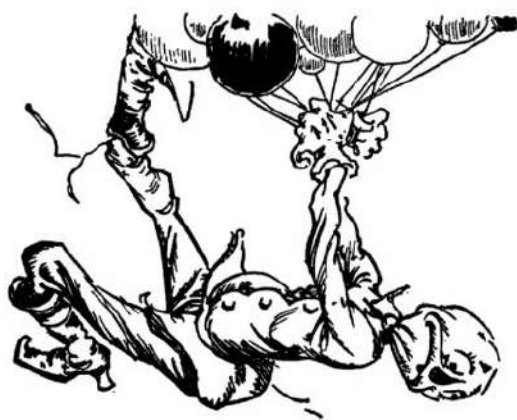
"What do these people look like, Jellia?" she asked curiously. "Really I'd enjoy seeing a few."

"They look like nothing you ever have imagined!" Jellia told her with a slight shudder. "Goochers! Here come

some now! And oh—it's those Blowmen—and all the others! Look, Wizard! Could we reach the Ozpril before they reach us?"

"Let's not try," decided the Wizard, as the Blowmen broke into a run. "Even if we made the plane, they might blow us to bits before I could get her started. Let's stay here and reason with them till I find something in this bag to help us."

"Oh, woe is we! Oh, woe is we!" gulped the Scarecrow, taking little runs and leaps into the air, hopeful that his balloons would lift him out of the danger zone as the threatening company drew closer. The Queen was marching grimly ahead of her subjects. In some way, decided Jellia, she had discovered Strut had not been in the silver plane. As the Wizard opened his kit bag the little Oz Maid rushed over to the Cowardly Lion.



"Get up!" directed Jellia, giving him a desperate prod with her toe. "Get up! We need your growl—and

LISTEN!" she begged, as the big beast rolled over and blinked sleepily at the approaching airlanders. "Do everything I tell you or we are lost, LOST!"

Dorothy concluded Jellia had been quite right about the inhabitants of Stratovania. They certainly were like no one she ever had seen, and she could not help admiring

the bold way Jellia stepped out to meet her dangerous adversary.

"Just what are you doing here?" demanded Jellia, folding her arms and tilting up her chin. "Did I not order you to leave us strictly alone? Blowmen, take this Kabebe woman away!"

"Kabebe's our Queen," muttered one of the Blowmen, scowling at Jellia. "At least," he corrected, glancing at his comrades, "she is our Queen until Strut returns."

"What makes you think Strut has NOT returned!" questioned Jellia, grandly. "Do you not recognize your Master!" With a regal wave, Jellia pointed to the Cowardly Lion. "Do you not believe that this is Strut—changed to this great beast by Ozma of Oz? But he is as powerful and able as ever, to rule this Kingdom! Strut!" Imperiously Jellia appealed to the Cowardly Lion. "Am I the Starina of Stratovania?"



The poor lion was as startled at Jellia's question as the Stratovanians. From sheer shock, he rose on his hind legs and let out a perfectly awful roar—which was perhaps as convincing an answer as he could have given.

"There! You see?" Jellia shrugged her shoulders as Queen Kabebe and the Blowmen turned white as ghosts and began to move away.

"It does sound like the Master," stuttered the Blowman, as the Cowardly Lion followed up his roar with a reverberating growl.

"What are your Majesty's wishes?" inquired Jellia, inclining her head graciously toward the trembling lion. "Take that woman away, and have our supper prepared and served at once in the Royal Pavilion!" directed the lion in his most commanding roar!