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IMAGINATION OVER KNOWLEDGE

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The Gnome King of Oz: Kuma's Hand Is At Work Again (16/20)

As the chair, foot-stool and clock lost their power of speech at the same instant the Gnome King regained his freedom, there was no one to arouse Wumbo. And it was nearly noon time before he did awaken. Puzzled to find himself in a chair instead of bed he straightened up, gave himself a shake and blinked sleepily up at the clock. Something about the clock reminded him of his bad little visitor and, whirling round, he stared anxiously at his arm-chair. But of course Ruggedo was not there. "Gone!" exclaimed the wizard, clapping his hand to his head. "Wumbo, you're growing old and stupid. What's to be done now? What's to be done now?"

Shuffling anxiously up and down his crystal hearth, Wumbo tried to

think of the quickest way to locate the wicked little gnome. A loud thump upon the door interrupted his wonderings and, as he mechanically muttered the magic phrase that opened it, the arm and hand of Kuma Party came flying into the study.

"A message from my son," breathed Wumbo, hurrying forward to clasp the hand. There was a note folded up



in the palm and while the wizard opened it the arm settled quietly down beside the clock.

"Dear father," wrote Kuma, "a small mortal boy and a gnome came to my cottage yesterday afternoon. The boy is lost and the gnome quite evidently means mischief. Knowing the perils for a mortal boy traveling in a magic country, I offered to lend him my hand if he ever needed it. This morning he sent for help and I have dispatched my right arm and hand to help him escape from the Kingdom of Patch and am sending my left to you for instructions. Can you, by your magic, suggest a way to locate the gnome and keep the boy from harm?" "Your dutiful and affectionate son Kuma."

Pushing his specs high on his forehead and knocking his wig sideways, Wumbo dashed over to his desk, and wrote:

"Send your arm to the Emerald City. The gnome has gone there wearing a cloak of invisibility. Take a letter of warning to Ozma and find and hold the gnome till Ozma can by her magic overpower him."

Folding the paper, he slipped it into Kuma's hand. The hand closed over it at once and in a flash the arm swept out of the cave and away over the Gillikin mountains.

"Well," sighed Wumbo, sinking into his chair, which immediately gave him a reassuring little hug, "that ought to help some. But the gnome certainly means to make trouble!"

Wumbo had never mastered long-distance magic and his spells and chants worked only when he was present, but

feeling that he had done all that he could without breaking the law, and being fatigued by so much thinking before breakfast, he gently clapped his hands. In a flash an appetizing repast floated in on a golden tray and settled upon his desk. Pulling up his chair, Wumbo mumbled a few words over the pens and pencils scattered about his desk. Next instant they had rolled to the floor and straightened up into an orchestra of five pieces. Softly and sweetly they began to play an old Oz quadrille and, somewhat soothed and comforted, the Wonder Worker began eating his breakfast.

