

Chapter Twenty Two - Ozma's Banquet

Ozma had seen in her Magic Picture the liberation of Inga's parents and the departure of the entire party for the Emerald City, so with her usual hospitality she ordered a splendid banquet prepared and invited all her quaint friends who were then in the Emerald City to be present that evening to meet the strangers who were to become her guests.

Glinda, also, in her wonderful Record Book had learned of the events that had taken place in the caverns of the Nome King and she became especially interested in the enchantment of the Prince of Boboland. So she hastily prepared several of her most powerful charms and then summoned her flock of sixteen white storks, which swiftly bore her to Ozma's palace. She arrived there before the Red Wagon did and was warmly greeted by the girl Ruler.

Realizing that the costume of Queen Garee of Pingaree must have become sadly worn and frayed, owing to her hardships and adventures, Ozma ordered a royal outfit prepared for the good Queen and had it laid in her chamber ready for her to put on as soon as she arrived, so she would not be shamed at the banquet. New costumes were also provided for King Kitticut and King Rinkitink and Prince Inga, all cut and made and embellished in the elaborate and becoming style then prevalent in the Land of Oz, and as soon as the party arrived at the palace Ozma's guests were escorted by her servants to their rooms, that they might bathe and dress themselves.

Glinda the Sorceress and the Wizard of Oz took charge of Bilbil the goat and went to a private room where they were not likely to be interrupted. Glinda first questioned Bilbil long and earnestly about the manner of his enchantment and the ceremony that had been used by the magician who enchanted him. At first Bilbil protested that he did not want to be restored to his natural shape, saying that he had been forever disgraced in the eyes of his people and of the entire world by being obliged to exist as a scrawny, scraggly goat. But Glinda pointed out that any person who incurred the enmity of a wicked magician was liable to suffer a similar fate, and assured him that his misfortune would make him better beloved by his subjects when he returned to them freed from his dire enchantment.

Bilbil was finally convinced of the truth of this assertion and agreed to submit to the experiments of Glinda and the Wizard, who knew they had a hard task before them and were not at all sure they could succeed. We know that Glinda

is the most complete mistress of magic who has ever existed, and she was wise enough to guess that the clever but evil magician who had enchanted Prince Bobo had used a spell that would puzzle any ordinary wizard or sorcerer to break; therefore she had given the matter much shrewd thought and hoped she had conceived a plan that would succeed. But because she was not positive of success she would have no one present at the incantation except her assistant, the Wizard of Oz.

First she transformed Bilbil the goat into a lamb, and this was done quite easily. Next she transformed the lamb into an ostrich, giving it two legs and feet instead of four. Then she tried to transform the ostrich into the original Prince Bobo, but this incantation was an utter failure. Glinda was not discouraged, however, but by a powerful spell transformed the ostrich into a tottenham--which is a lower form of a man. Then the tottenham was transformed into a mifket, which was a great step in advance and, finally, Glinda transformed the mifket into a handsome young man, tall and shapely, who fell on his knees before the great Sorceress and gratefully kissed her hand, admitting that he had now recovered his proper shape and was indeed Prince Bobo of Boboland.

This process of magic, successful though it was in the end, had required so much time that the banquet was now awaiting their presence. Bobo was already dressed in princely raiment and although he seemed very much humbled by his recent lowly condition, they finally persuaded him to join the festivities.

When Rinkitink saw that his goat had now become a Prince, he did not know whether to be sorry or glad, for he felt that he would miss the companionship of the quarrelsome animal he had so long been accustomed to ride upon, while at the same time he rejoiced that poor Bilbil had come to his own again.

Prince Bobo humbly begged Rinkitink's forgiveness for having been so disagreeable to him, at times, saying that the nature of a goat had influenced him and the surly disposition he had shown was a part of his enchantment. But the jolly King assured the Prince that he had really enjoyed Bilbil's grumpy speeches and forgave him readily. Indeed, they all discovered the young Prince Bobo to be an exceedingly courteous and pleasant person, although he was somewhat reserved and dignified.

Ah, but it was a great feast that Ozma served in her gorgeous banquet hall that night and everyone was as happy as could be. The Shaggy Man was there, and so was Jack Pumpkinhead and the Tin Woodman and Cap'n Bill.

Beside Princess Dorothy sat Tiny Trot and Betsy Bobbin, and the three little girls were almost as sweet to look upon as was Ozma, who sat at the head of her table and outshone all her guests in loveliness.

King Rinkitink was delighted with the quaint people of Oz and laughed and joked with the tin man and the pumpkin-headed man and found Cap'n Bill a very agreeable companion. But what amused the jolly King most were the animal guests, which Ozma always invited to her banquets and seated at a table by themselves, where they talked and chatted together as people do but were served the sort of food their natures required. The Hungry Tiger and Cowardly Lion and the Glass Cat were much admired by Rinkitink, but when he met a mule named Hank, which Betsy Bobbin had brought to Oz, the King found the creature so comical that he laughed and chuckled until his friends thought he would choke. Then while the banquet was still in progress, Rinkitink composed and sang a song to the mule and they all joined in the chorus, which was something like this:

"It's very queer how big an ear Is worn by Mr. Donkey; And yet I fear he
could not hear If it were on a monkey.

'Tis thick and strong and broad and long And also very hairy; It's quite
becoming to our Hank But might disgrace a fairy!"

This song was received with so much enthusiasm that Rinkitink was prevailed upon to sing another. They gave him a little time to compose the rhyme, which he declared would be better if he could devote a month or two to its composition, but the sentiment he expressed was so admirable that no one criticized the song or the manner in which the jolly little King sang it.

Dorothy wrote down the words on a piece of paper, and here they are:

"We're merry comrades all, to-night, Because we've won a gallant fight
And conquered all our foes. We're not afraid of anything, So let us gayly
laugh and sing Until we seek repose.

"We've all our grateful hearts can wish; King Gos has gone to feed the fish,
Queen Cor has gone, as well; King Kitticut has found his own, Prince Bobo
soon will have a throne Relieved of magic spell.

"So let's forget the horrid strife That fell upon our peaceful life And
caused distress and pain; For very soon across the sea We'll all be sailing
merrily To Pingaree again."