

CHAPTER 4 - DOROTHY'S LONELY BREAKFAST

Dorothy, who occupied one of the coziest apartments in Ozma's palace, wakened the morning after the party with a feeling of great uneasiness. At breakfast, the Scarecrow was missing. Although he, the Tin Woodman and Scraps did not require food, they always livened up the table with their conversation. Ordinarily Dorothy would have thought nothing of the Scarecrow's absence, but she could not forget his distressed expression when Professor Wogglebug had so rudely remarked on his family tree. The Professor himself had left before breakfast, and everybody but Dorothy had forgotten all about the Royal Book of Oz.

Already many of Ozma's guests who did not live in the palace were preparing to depart, but Dorothy could not get over her feeling of uneasiness. The Scarecrow was her very best friend, and it was not like him to go without saying goodbye. So she hunted through the gardens and in every room of the palace and questioned all the servants. Unfortunately, Jellia Jamb, who was the only one who had seen the Scarecrow go, was with her mistress. Ozma always breakfasted alone and spent the morning over state matters. Knowing how busy she was, Dorothy did not like to disturb her. Betsy Bobbin and Trot, real little girls like Dorothy, also lived in the Fairy palace, and Ozma was a great chum for them. But the Kingdom of Oz had to be governed in between times, and they all knew that unless Ozma had the mornings to herself, she could not play with them in the afternoons. So Dorothy searched by herself.

"Perhaps I didn't look hard enough," thought the little girl, and searched the palace all over again.

"Don't worry," advised the Tin Woodman, who was playing checkers with Scraps. "He's probably gone home."

"He is a man of brains; why worry Because he's left us in a hurry?"

chuckled Scraps with a careless wave of her hand, and Dorothy, laughing in spite of herself, ran out to have another look in the garden.

"That is just what he has done, and if I hurry, I may overtake him. Anyway, I believe I'll go and pay him a visit," thought Dorothy.

Trot and Betsy Bobbin were swinging in one of the royal hammocks, and when Dorothy invited them to go along, they explained that they were going

on a picnic with the Tin Woodman. So without waiting to ask anyone else or even whistling for Toto, her little dog, Dorothy skipped out of the garden.

The Cowardly Lion, half asleep under a rose bush, caught a glimpse of her blue dress flashing by, and bounding to his feet thudded after her.

"Where are you going?" he asked, stifling a giant yawn.

"To visit the Scarecrow," explained Dorothy. "He looked so unhappy last night. I am afraid he is worrying about his family tree, and I thought p'raps I could cheer him up."

The Cowardly Lion stretched luxuriously. "I'll go too," he rumbled, giving himself a shake. "But it's the first time I ever heard of the Scarecrow worrying."

"But you see," Dorothy said gently, "Professor Wogglebug told him he had no family."

"Family! Family fiddlesticks! Hasn't he got us?" The Cowardly Lion stopped and waved his tail indignantly.

"Why, you dear old thing!" Dorothy threw her arms around his neck. "You've given me a lovely idea!" The Cowardly Lion tried not to look pleased.

"Well, as long as I've given it to you, you might tell me what it is," he suggested mildly.

"Why," said Dorothy, skipping along happily, "we'll let him adopt us and be his really relations. I'll be his sister, and you'll be--"

"His cousin--that is, if you think he wouldn't mind having a great coward like me for a cousin," finished the Cowardly Lion in an anxious voice.

"Do you still feel as cowardly as ever?" asked Dorothy sympathetically.

"More so!" sighed the great beast, glancing apprehensively over his shoulder. This made Dorothy laugh, for although the lion trembled like a cup custard at the approach of danger, he always managed to fight with great valor, and the little girl felt safer with him than with the whole army of Oz, who never were frightened but who always ran away.

Now anyone who is at all familiar with his geozify knows that the Fairyland of Oz is divided into four parts, exactly like a parchesi board, with the Emerald City in the very center, the purple Gillikin Country to the north, the red Quadling Country to the south, the blue Munchkin Country to the east,

and the yellow Country of the Winkies to the west. It was toward the west that Dorothy and the Cowardly Lion turned their steps, for it was in the Winkie Country that the Scarecrow had built his gorgeous golden tower in exactly the shape of a huge ear of corn.

Dorothy ran along beside the Cowardly Lion, chatting over their many adventures in Oz, and stopping now and then to pick buttercups and daisies that dotted the roadside. She tied a big bunch to the tip of her friend's tail and twined some more in his mane, so that he presented a very festive appearance indeed. Then, when she grew tired, she climbed on his big back, and swiftly they jogged through the pleasant land of the Winkies. The people waved to them from windows and fields, for everyone loved little Dorothy and the big lion, and as they passed a neat yellow cottage, a little Winkie Lady came running down the path with a cup of tea in one hand and a bucket in the other.

"I saw you coming and thought you might be thirsty," she called hospitably. Dorothy drank her cup without alighting.

"We're in an awful hurry; we're visiting the Scarecrow," she exclaimed apologetically. The lion drank his bucket of tea at one gulp. It was so hot that it made his eyes water.

"How I loathe tea! If I hadn't been such a coward, I'd have upset the bucket," groaned the lion as the little Winkie Lady went back into her house. "But no, I was afraid of hurting her feelings. Ugh, what a terrible thing it is to be a coward!"

"Nonsense!" said Dorothy, wiping her eyes with her handkerchief. "You're not a coward, you're just polite. But let's run very fast so we can reach the Scarecrow's in time for lunch."

So like the wind away raced the Cowardly Lion, Dorothy holding fast to his mane, with her curls blowing straight out behind, and in exactly two Oz hours and seventeen Winkie minutes they came to the dazzling corn-ear residence of their old friend. Hurrying through the cornfields that surrounded his singular mansion, Dorothy and the Cowardly Lion rushed through the open door.

"We've come for lunch," announced Dorothy.

"And I'm hungry enough to eat crow," rumbled the lion. Then both stopped in dismay, for the big reception room was empty. From a room above came a

shuffling of feet, and Blink, the Scarecrow's gentlemanly housekeeper, came running down the stairs.

"Where's the Scarecrow?" asked Dorothy anxiously. "Isn't he here?"

"Here! Isn't he there? Isn't he in the Emerald City?" gasped the little Winkie, putting his specs on upside down.

"No--at least, I don't think so. Oh, dear, I just felt that something had happened to him!" wailed Dorothy, sinking into an ebony armchair and fanning herself with a silk sofa cushion.

"Now don't be alarmed." The Cowardly Lion rushed to Dorothy's side and knocked three vases and a clock off a little table, just to show how calm he was. "Think of his brains! The Scarecrow has never come to harm yet, and all we have to do is to return to the Emerald City and look in Ozma's Magic Picture. Then, when we know where he is, we can go and find him and tell him about our little adoption plan," he added, looking hopefully at Dorothy.

"The Scarecrow himself couldn't have spoken more sensibly," observed Blink with a great sigh of relief, and even Dorothy felt better.

In Ozma's palace, as many of you know, there is a Magic Picture, and when Ozma or Dorothy want to see any of their friends, they have merely to wish to see them, and instantly the picture shows the person wished for and exactly what he is doing at that certain time.

"Of course!" sighed Dorothy. "Why didn't I think of it myself?"

"Better have some lunch before you start back," suggested Blink, and bustling about had soon set out an appetizing repast. Dorothy was too busy worrying about the Scarecrow to have much appetite, but the Cowardly Lion swallowed seventeen roasts and a bucket of corn syrup.

"To give me courage!" he explained to Dorothy, licking his chops. "There's nothing that makes me so cowardly as an empty stomach!"

It was quite late in the afternoon before they could get away. Blink insisted on putting up a lunch, and it took some time to make enough sandwiches for the Cowardly Lion. But at last it was ready and packed into an old hat box belonging to Mops, the Scarecrow's cook. Then Dorothy, balancing the box carefully on her lap, climbed on the Cowardly Lion's back, and assuring Blink that they would return in a few days with his master, they bade him farewell. Blink almost spoiled things by bursting into tears, but he managed to restrain himself long enough to say goodbye, and Dorothy and the

Cowardly Lion, feeling a little solemn themselves, started toward the Emerald City.

"My, but it's growing dark," said Dorothy after they had gone several miles. "I believe it's going to storm."

Scarcely had she finished speaking before there was a terrific crash of thunder. The Cowardly Lion promptly sat down. Off of his back bounced the sandwich box and into the sandwich box rolled Dorothy, head first.

"How terribly upsetting," coughed the Cowardly Lion.

"I should say it was!" Dorothy crawled indignantly out of the hat box and began wiping the butter from her nose. "You've simply ruined the supper!"

"It was my heart," explained the Cowardly Lion sorrowfully. "It jumped so hard that it upset me, but climb on my back again, and I'll run very fast to some place of shelter."

"But where are you?" Dorothy asked in real alarm, for it had grown absolutely dark.

"Here," quavered the Cowardly Lion, and guided by his voice, Dorothy stumbled over to him and climbed again on his back. One crash of thunder followed another, and at each crash the Cowardly Lion leapt forward a bit faster until they fairly flew through the dark.

"It won't take us long to reach the Emerald City at this rate!" called Dorothy, but the wind tossed the words far behind her, and seeing that conversation was impossible, she clung fast to the lion's mane and began thinking about the Scarecrow. The thunder continued at frequent intervals, but there was no rain, and after they had been running for what seemed to Dorothy hours and hours, a sudden terrific bump sent her flying over the lion's head into a bush. Too breathless to speak, she felt herself carefully all over. Then, finding that she was still in one piece, she called to the Cowardly Lion. She could hear him moaning and muttering about his heart.

"Any bones broken?" she asked anxiously.

"Only my head," groaned the lion dismally. Just then the darkness lifted as suddenly as it had fallen, and Dorothy saw him leaning against a tree with his eyes closed. There was a big bump on his head. With a little cry of sympathy, Dorothy hurried toward him, when all at once something strange about their surroundings struck her.

"Why, where are we?" cried the little girl, stopping short. The lion's eyes flew open, and forgetting all about his bump, he looked around in dismay. No sign of the Emerald City anywhere. Indeed, they were in a great, dim forest, and considering the number of trees, it is a wonder that they had not run into one long ago.

"I must have run the wrong way," faltered the Cowardly Lion in a distressed voice.

"You couldn't help that; anyone would lose his way in the dark," said Dorothy generously. "But I wish we hadn't fallen in the sandwiches. I'm hungry!"

"So am I. Do you think anyone lives in this forest, Dorothy?"

Dorothy did not answer, for just then she caught sight of a big sign nailed to one of the trees.

"Turn to the right," directed the sign.

"Oh, come on!" cried Dorothy, cheering up immediately. "I believe we're going to have another adventure."

"I'd rather have some supper," sighed the Cowardly Lion wistfully, "but unless we want to spend the night here, we might as well move along. I'm to be fed up on adventure, I suppose."

"Turn to the left," advised the next sign, and the two turned obediently and hurried on, trying to keep a straight course through the trees. In a Fairyland like Oz, where there are no trains or trolleys or even horses for traveling (excepting Ozma's sawhorse), there are bound to be unexplored portions. And though Dorothy had been at one time or another in almost every part of Oz, the country through which they were now passing was totally unfamiliar to her. Night was coming on, and it was growing so dark that she could hardly read the third sign when they presently came upon it.

"Don't sing," directed the sign sternly.

"Sing!" snapped Dorothy indignantly, "Who wants to sing?"

"We might as well keep to the left," said the Cowardly Lion in a resigned voice, and they walked along for some time in silence. The trees were thinning out, and as they came to the edge of the forest, another sign confronted them.

"Slow down," read Dorothy with great difficulty. "What nonsense! If we slow down, how shall we ever get anywhere?"

"Wait a minute," mused the Cowardly Lion, half closing his eyes. "Aren't there two roads just ahead, one going up and one going down? We're to take the down road, I suppose. 'Slow down,' isn't that what it says?"

Slow down it surely was, for the road was so steep and full of stones that Dorothy and the Cowardly Lion had to pick their way with utmost care. But even bad roads must end somewhere, and coming suddenly to the edge of the woods, they saw a great city lying just below. A dim light burned over the main gate, and toward this the Cowardly Lion and Dorothy hurried as fast as they could. This was not very fast, for an unaccountable drowsiness was stealing over them.

Slowly and more slowly, the tired little girl and her great four-footed companion advanced toward the dimly lighted gate. They were so drowsy that they had ceased to talk. But they dragged on.

"Hah, hoh, hum!" yawned the Cowardly Lion. "What makes my feet so heavy?"

He stopped short and examined each of his four feet sleepily.

Dorothy swallowed a yawn and tried to run, but a walk was all she could manage.

"Hah, hoh, hum!" she gaped, stumbling along with her eyes closed.

By the time they had reached the gate, they were yawning so hard that the Cowardly Lion had nearly dislocated his jaw, and Dorothy was perfectly breathless. Holding to the lion's mane to steady herself, Dorothy blinked up uncertainly at the sign over the gate.

"Hah--here we are--Hoh!" She held her hand wearily before her mouth.

Then, with a great effort, she read the words of the sign.

"Um--Great--Grand and Mighty Slow Kingdom of Pokes! Uh-hah--Pokes! Do you hear? Hah, hoh, hu, uum!"

Dorothy looked about in alarm, despite her sleepiness.

"Do you hear?" she repeated anxiously as no answer came through the gloom.

The Cowardly Lion did not hear. He had fallen down and was fast asleep, and so in another minute was Dorothy, her head pillowed against his kind, comfortable, cowardly heart. Fast asleep at the gates of a strange gray city!