

## 6. Ozma's Birthday Presents

When Cap'n Bill and Trot and the Glass Cat had started for the hidden island in the far-off river to get the Magic Flower, Dorothy wondered again what she could give Ozma on her birthday. She met the Patchwork Girl and said:

"What are you going to give Ozma for a birthday present?"

"I've written a song for her," answered the strange Patchwork Girl, who went by the name of "Scraps," and who, though stuffed with cotton, had a fair assortment of mixed brains. "It's a splendid song and the chorus runs this way:

I am crazy; You're a daisy, Ozma dear; I'm demented; You're contented, Ozma dear; I am patched and gay and glary; You're a sweet and lovely fairy; May your birthdays all be happy, Ozma dear!"

"How do you like it, Dorothy?" inquired the Patchwork Girl.

"Is it good poetry, Scraps?" asked Dorothy, doubtfully.

"It's as good as any ordinary song," was the reply. "I have given it a dandy title, too. I shall call the song: 'When Ozma Has a Birthday, Everybody's Sure to Be Gay, for She Cannot Help the Fact That She Was Born.'"

"That's a pretty long title, Scraps," said Dorothy.

"That makes it stylish," replied the Patchwork Girl, turning a somersault and alighting on one stuffed foot. "Now-a-days the titles are sometimes longer than the songs."

Dorothy left her and walked slowly toward the place, where she met the Tin Woodman just going up the front steps.

"What are you going to give Ozma on her birthday?" she asked.

"It's a secret, but I'll tell you," replied the Tin Woodman, who was Emperor of the Winkies. "I am having my people make Ozma a lovely girdle set with beautiful tin nuggets. Each tin nugget will be surrounded by a circle of emeralds, just to set it off to good advantage. The clasp of the girdle will be pure tin! Won't that be fine?"

"I'm sure she'll like it," said Dorothy. "Do you know what I can give her?"

"I haven't the slightest idea, Dorothy. It took me three months to think of my own present for Ozma."

The girl walked thoughtfully around to the back of the palace, and presently came upon the famous Scarecrow of Oz, who has having two of the palace servants stuff his legs with fresh straw.

"What are you going to give Ozma on her birthday?" asked Dorothy.

"I want to surprise her," answered the Scarecrow.

"I won't tell," promised Dorothy.

"Well, I'm having some straw slippers made for her--all straw, mind you, and braided very artistically. Ozma has always admired my straw filling, so I'm sure she'll be pleased with these lovely straw slippers."

"Ozma will be pleased with anything her loving friends give her," said the girl. "What I'M worried about, Scarecrow, is what to give Ozma that she hasn't got already."

"That's what worried me, until I thought of the slippers," said the Scarecrow. "You'll have to THINK, Dorothy; that's the only way to get a good idea. If I hadn't such wonderful brains, I'd never have thought of those straw foot-decorations."

Dorothy left him and went to her room, where she sat down and tried to think hard. A Pink Kitten was curled up on the window-sill and Dorothy asked her:

"What can I give Ozma for her birthday present?"

"Oh, give her some milk," replied the Pink Kitten; "that's the nicest thing I know of."

A fuzzy little black dog had squatted down at Dorothy's feet and now looked up at her with intelligent eyes.

"Tell me, Toto," said the girl; "what would Ozma like best for a birthday present?"

The little black dog wagged his tail.

"Your love," said he. "Ozma wants to be loved more than anything else."

"But I already love her, Toto!"

"Then tell her you love her twice as much as you ever did before."

"That wouldn't be true," objected Dorothy, "for I've always loved her as much as I could, and, really, Toto, I want to give Ozma some PRESENT, 'cause everyone else will give her a present."

"Let me see," said Toto. "How would it be to give her that useless Pink Kitten?"

"No, Toto; that wouldn't do."

"Then six kisses."

"No; that's no present."

"Well, I guess you'll have to figure it out for yourself, Dorothy," said the little dog. "To MY notion you're more particular than Ozma will be."

Dorothy decided that if anyone could help her it would be Glinda the Good, the wonderful Sorceress of Oz who was Ozma's faithful subject and friend. But Glinda's castle was in the Quadling Country and quite a journey from the Emerald City.

So the little girl went to Ozma and asked permission to use the Wooden Sawhorse and the royal Red Wagon to pay a visit to Glinda, and the girl Ruler kissed Princess Dorothy and graciously granted permission.

The Wooden Sawhorse was one of the most remarkable creatures in Oz. Its body was a small log and its legs were limbs of trees stuck in the body. Its eyes were knots, its mouth was sawed in the end of the log and its ears were two chips. A small branch had been left at the rear end of the log to serve as a tail.

Ozma herself, during one of her early adventures, had brought this wooden horse to life, and so she was much attached to the queer animal and had shod the bottoms of its wooden legs with plates of gold so they would not wear out. The Sawhorse was a swift and willing traveler, and though it could talk if need arose, it seldom said anything unless spoken to. When the Sawhorse was harnessed to the Red Wagon there were no reins to guide him because all that was needed was to tell him where to go.

Dorothy now told him to go to Glinda's Castle and the Sawhorse carried her there with marvelous speed.

"Glinda," said Dorothy, when she had been greeted by the Sorceress, who was tall and stately, with handsome and dignified features and dressed in a splendid and becoming gown, "what are you going to give Ozma for a birthday present?"

The Sorceress smiled and answered:

"Come into my patio and I will show you."

So they entered a place that was surrounded by the wings of the great castle but had no roof, and was filled with flowers and fountains and exquisite statuary and many settees and chairs of polished marble or filigree gold. Here there were gathered fifty beautiful young girls, Glinda's handmaids, who had been selected from all parts of the Land of Oz on account of their wit and beauty and sweet dispositions. It was a great honor to be made one of Glinda's handmaidens.

When Dorothy followed the Sorceress into this delightful patio all the fifty girls were busily weaving, and their shuttles were filled with a sparkling green spun glass such as the little girl had never seen before.

"What is it, Glinda?" she asked.

"One of my recent discoveries," explained the Sorceress. "I have found a way to make threads from emeralds, by softening the stones and then spinning them into long, silken strands. With these emerald threads we are weaving cloth to make Ozma a splendid court gown for her birthday. You will notice that the threads have all the beautiful glitter and luster of the emeralds from which they are made, and so Ozma's new dress will be the most magnificent the world has ever seen, and quite fitting for our lovely Ruler of the Fairyland of Oz."

Dorothy's eyes were fairly dazed by the brilliance of the emerald cloth, some of which the girls had already woven.

"I've never seen ANYthing so beautiful!" she said, with a sigh. "But tell me, Glinda, what can I give our lovely Ozma on her birthday?"

The good Sorceress considered this question for a long time before she replied. Finally she said:

"Of course there will be a grand feast at the Royal Palace on Ozma's birthday, and all our friends will be present. So I suggest that you make a fine big birthday cake of Ozma, and surround it with candles."

"Oh, just a CAKE!" exclaimed Dorothy, in disappointment.

"Nothing is nicer for a birthday," said the Sorceress.

"How many candles should there be on the cake?" asked the girl.

"Just a row of them," replied Glinda, "for no one knows how old Ozma is, although she appears to us to be just a young girl--as fresh and fair as if she had lived but a few years."

"A cake doesn't seem like much of a present," Dorothy asserted.

"Make it a surprise cake," suggested the Sorceress. "Don't you remember the four and twenty blackbirds that were baked in a pie? Well, you need not use live blackbirds in your cake, but you could have some surprise of a different sort."

"Like what?" questioned Dorothy, eagerly.

"If I told you, it wouldn't be YOUR present to Ozma, but MINE," answered the Sorceress, with a smile. "Think it over, my dear, and I am sure you can originate a surprise that will add greatly to the joy and merriment of Ozma's birthday banquet."

Dorothy thanked her friend and entered the Red Wagon and told the Sawhorse to take her back home to the palace in the Emerald City.

On the way she thought the matter over seriously of making a surprise birthday cake and finally decided what to do.

As soon as she reached home, she went to the Wizard of Oz, who had a room fitted up in one of the high towers of the palace, where he studied magic so as to be able to perform such wizardry as Ozma commanded him to do for the welfare of her subjects.

The Wizard and Dorothy were firm friends and had enjoyed many strange adventures together. He was a little man with a bald head and sharp eyes and a round, jolly face, and because he was neither haughty nor proud he had become a great favorite with the Oz people.

"Wizard," said Dorothy, "I want you to help me fix up a present for Ozma's birthday."

"I'll be glad to do anything for you and for Ozma," he answered. "What's on your mind, Dorothy?"

"I'm going to make a great cake, with frosting and candles, and all that, you know."

"Very good," said the Wizard.

"In the center of this cake I'm going to leave a hollow place, with just a roof of the frosting over it," continued the girl.

"Very good," repeated the Wizard, nodding his bald head.

"In that hollow place," said Dorothy, "I want to hide a lot of monkeys about three inches high, and after the cake is placed on the banquet table, I want the monkeys to break through the frosting and dance around on the tablecloth. Then, I want each monkey to cut out a piece of cake and hand it to a guest."

"Mercy me!" cried the little Wizard, as he chuckled with laughter. "Is that ALL you want, Dorothy?"

"Almost," said she. "Can you think of anything more the little monkeys can do, Wizard?"

"Not just now," he replied. "But where will you get such tiny monkeys?"

"That's where you're to help me," said Dorothy. "In some of those wild forests in the Gillikin Country are lots of monkeys."

"Big ones," said the Wizard.

"Well, you and I will go there, and we'll get some of the big monkeys, and you will make them small--just three inches high--by means of your magic, and we'll put the little monkeys all in a basket and bring them home with us. Then you'll train them to dance--up here in your room, where no one can see them--and on Ozma's birthday we'll put 'em into the cake and they'll know by that time just what to do."

The Wizard looked at Dorothy with admiring approval, and chuckled again.

"That's really clever, my dear," he said, "and I see no reason why we can't do it, just the way you say, if only we can get the wild monkeys to agree to it."

"Do you think they'll object?" asked the girl.

"Yes; but perhaps we can argue them into it. Anyhow it's worth trying, and I'll help you if you'll agree to let this Surprise Cake be a present to Ozma from you and me together. I've been wondering what I could give Ozma, and as I've got to train the monkeys as well as make them small, I think you ought to make me your partner."

"Of course," said Dorothy; "I'll be glad to do so."

"Then it's a bargain," declared the Wizard. "We must go to seek those monkeys at once, however, for it will take time to train them and we'll have to travel a good way to the Gillikin forests where they live."

"I'm ready to go any time," agreed Dorothy. "Shall we ask Ozma to let us take the Sawhorse?"

The Wizard did not answer that at once. He took time to think of the suggestion.

"No," he answered at length, "the Red Wagon couldn't get through the thick forests and there's some danger to us in going into the wild places to search for monkeys. So I propose we take the Cowardly Lion and the Hungry Tiger. We can ride on their backs as well as in the Red Wagon, and if there is danger to us from other beasts, these two friendly champions will protect us from all harm."

"That's a splendid idea!" exclaimed Dorothy. "Let's go now and ask the Hungry Tiger and the Cowardly Lion if they will help us. Shall we ask Ozma if we can go?"

"I think not," said the Wizard, getting his hat and his black bag of magic tools. "This is to be a surprise for her birthday, and so she mustn't know where we're going. We'll just leave word, in case Ozma inquires for us, that we'll be back in a few days."