

## Chapter Twenty Three - The Land of Oz

The straw man's appearance on the water was so sudden that it startled Trot, but Cap'n Bill had the presence of mind to stick his wooden leg out over the water and the Scarecrow made a desperate clutch and grabbed the leg with both hands. He managed to hold on until Trot and Button-Bright knelt down and seized his clothing, but the children would have been powerless to drag the soaked Scarecrow ashore had not Cap'n Bill now assisted them. When they laid him on the ledge of rubies he was the most useless looking Scarecrow you can imagine--his straw sodden and dripping with water, his clothing wet and crumpled, while even the sack upon which his face was painted had become so wrinkled that the old jolly expression of their stuffed friend's features was entirely gone. But he could still speak, and when Trot bent down her ear she heard him say:

"Get me out of here as soon as you can."

That seemed a wise thing to do, so Cap'n Bill lifted his head and shoulders, and Trot and Button-Bright each took a leg; among them they partly carried and partly dragged the damp Scarecrow out of the Ruby Cavern, along the tunnel, and up the flight of rock steps. It was somewhat difficult to get him past the edge of the waterfall, but they succeeded, after much effort, and a few minutes later laid their poor comrade on a grassy bank where the sun shone upon him freely and he was beyond the reach of the spray.

Cap'n Bill now knelt down and examined the straw that the Scarecrow was stuffed with.

"I don't believe it'll be of much use to him, any more," said he, "for it's full of polliwogs an' fish eggs, an' the water has took all the crinkle out o' the straw an' ruined it. I guess, Trot, that the best thing for us to do is to empty out all his body an' carry his head an' clothes along the road till we come to a field or a house where we can get some fresh straw."

"Yes, Cap'n," she agreed, "there's nothing else to be done. But how shall we ever find the road to Glinda's palace, without the Scarecrow to guide us?"

"That's easy," said the Scarecrow, speaking in a rather feeble but distinct voice. "If Cap'n Bill will carry my head on his shoulders, eyes front, I can tell him which way to go."

So they followed that plan and emptied all the old, wet straw out of the Scarecrow's body. Then the sailor-man wrung out the clothes and laid them in the sun till they were quite dry. Trot took charge of the head and pressed the wrinkles out of the face as it dried, so that after a while the Scarecrow's expression became natural again, and as jolly as before.

This work consumed some time, but when it was completed they again started upon their journey, Button-Bright carrying the boots and hat, Trot the bundle of clothes, and Cap'n Bill the head. The Scarecrow, having regained his composure and being now in a good humor, despite his recent mishaps, beguiled their way with stories of the Land of Oz.

It was not until the next morning, however, that they found straw with which to restuff the Scarecrow. That evening they came to the same little house they had slept in before, only now it was magically transferred to a new place. The same bountiful supper as before was found smoking hot upon the table and the same cosy beds were ready for them to sleep in.

They rose early and after breakfast went out of doors, and there, lying just beside the house, was a heap of clean, crisp straw. Ozma had noticed the Scarecrow's accident in her Magic Picture and had notified the Wizard to provide the straw, for she knew the adventurers were not likely to find straw in the country through which they were now traveling.

They lost no time in stuffing the Scarecrow anew, and he was greatly delighted at being able to walk around again and to assume the leadership of the little party.

"Really," said Trot, "I think you're better than you were before, for you are fresh and sweet all through and rustle beautifully when you move."

"Thank you, my dear," he replied gratefully. "I always feel like a new man when I'm freshly stuffed. No one likes to get musty, you know, and even good straw may be spoiled by age."

"It was water that spoiled you, the last time," remarked Button-Bright, "which proves that too much bathing is as bad as too little. But, after all, Scarecrow, water is not as dangerous for you as fire."

"All things are good in moderation," declared the Scarecrow. "But now, let us hurry on, or we shall not reach Glinda's palace by nightfall."

## Chapter Twenty-Four

### The Royal Reception

At about four o'clock of that same day the Red Wagon drew up at the entrance to Glinda's palace and Dorothy and Betsy jumped out. Ozma's Red Wagon was almost a chariot, being inlaid with rubies and pearls, and it was drawn by Ozma's favorite steed, the wooden Sawhorse.

"Shall I unharness you," asked Dorothy, "so you can come in and visit?"

"No," replied the Sawhorse. "I'll just stand here and think. Take your time. Thinking doesn't seem to bore me at all."

"What will you think of?" inquired Betsy.

"Of the acorn that grew the tree from which I was made."

So they left the wooden animal and went in to see Glinda, who welcomed the little girls in her most cordial manner.

"I knew you were on your way," said the good Sorceress when they were seated in her library, "for I learned from my Record Book that you intended to meet Trot and Button-Bright on their arrival here."

"Is the strange little girl named Trot?" asked Dorothy.

"Yes; and her companion, the old sailor, is named Cap'n Bill. I think we shall like them very much, for they are just the kind of people to enjoy and appreciate our fairyland and I do not see any way, at present, for them to return again to the outside world."

"Well, there's room enough here for them, I'm sure," said Dorothy. "Betsy and I are already eager to welcome Trot. It will keep us busy for a year, at least, showing her all the wonderful things in Oz."

Glinda smiled.

"I have lived here many years," said she, "and I have not seen all the wonders of Oz yet."

Meantime the travelers were drawing near to the palace, and when they first caught sight of its towers Trot realized that it was far more grand and imposing than was the King's castle in Jinxland. The nearer they came, the

more beautiful the palace appeared, and when finally the Scarecrow led them up the great marble steps, even Button-Bright was filled with awe.

"I don't see any soldiers to guard the place," said the little girl.

"There is no need to guard Glinda's palace," replied the Scarecrow. "We have no wicked people in Oz, that we know of, and even if there were any, Glinda's magic would be powerful enough to protect her."

Button-Bright was now standing on the top steps of the entrance, and he suddenly exclaimed:

"Why, there's the Sawhorse and the Red Wagon! Hip, hooray!" and next moment he was rushing down to throw his arms around the neck of the wooden horse, which good-naturedly permitted this familiarity when it recognized in the boy an old friend.

Button-Bright's shout had been heard inside the palace, so now Dorothy and Betsy came running out to embrace their beloved friend, the Scarecrow, and to welcome Trot and Cap'n Bill to the Land of Oz.

"We've been watching you for a long time, in Ozma's Magic Picture," said Dorothy, "and Ozma has sent us to invite you to her own palace in the Em'rald City. I don't know if you realize how lucky you are to get that invitation, but you'll understand it better after you've seen the royal palace and the Em'rald City."

Glinda now appeared in person to lead all the party into her Azure Reception Room. Trot was a little afraid of the stately Sorceress, but gained courage by holding fast to the hands of Betsy and Dorothy. Cap'n Bill had no one to help him feel at ease, so the old sailor sat stiffly on the edge of his chair and said:

"Yes, ma'am," or "No, ma'am," when he was spoken to, and was greatly embarrassed by so much splendor.

The Scarecrow had lived so much in palaces that he felt quite at home, and he chatted to Glinda and the Oz girls in a merry, light-hearted way. He told all about his adventures in Jinxland, and at the Great Waterfall, and on the journey hither--most of which his hearers knew already--and then he asked Dorothy and Betsy what had happened in the Emerald City since he had left there.

They all passed the evening and the night at Glinda's palace, and the Sorceress was so gracious to Cap'n Bill that the old man by degrees regained his self-possession and began to enjoy himself. Trot had already come to the conclusion that in Dorothy and Betsy she had found two delightful comrades, and Button-Bright was just as much at home here as he had been in the fields of Jinxland or when he was buried in the popcorn snow of the Land of Mo.

The next morning they arose bright and early and after breakfast bade good-bye to the kind Sorceress, whom Trot and Cap'n Bill thanked earnestly for sending the Scarecrow to Jinxland to rescue them. Then they all climbed into the Red Wagon.

There was room for all on the broad seats, and when all had taken their places--Dorothy, Trot and Betsy on the rear seat and Cap'n Bill, Button-Bright and the Scarecrow in front--they called "Gid-dap!" to the Sawhorse and the wooden steed moved briskly away, pulling the Red Wagon with ease.

It was now that the strangers began to perceive the real beauties of the Land of Oz, for they were passing through a more thickly settled part of the country and the population grew more dense as they drew nearer to the Emerald City. Everyone they met had a cheery word or a smile for the Scarecrow, Dorothy and Betsy Bobbin, and some of them remembered Button-Bright and welcomed him back to their country.

It was a happy party, indeed, that journeyed in the Red Wagon to the Emerald City, and Trot already began to hope that Ozma would permit her and Cap'n Bill to live always in the Land of Oz.

When they reached the great city they were more amazed than ever, both by the concourse of people in their quaint and picturesque costumes, and by the splendor of the city itself. But the magnificence of the Royal Palace quite took their breath away, until Ozma received them in her own pretty apartment and by her charming manners and assuring smiles made them feel they were no longer strangers.

Trot was given a lovely little room next to that of Dorothy, while Cap'n Bill had the cosiest sort of a room next to Trot's and overlooking the gardens. And that evening Ozma gave a grand banquet and reception in honor of the new arrivals. While Trot had read of many of the people she then met, Cap'n Bill was less familiar with them and many of the unusual characters introduced to him that evening caused the old sailor to open his eyes wide in astonishment.

He had thought the live Scarecrow about as curious as anyone could be, but now he met the Tin Woodman, who was all made of tin, even to his heart, and carried a gleaming axe over his shoulder wherever he went. Then there was Jack Pumpkinhead, whose head was a real pumpkin with the face carved upon it; and Professor Wogglebug, who had the shape of an enormous bug but was dressed in neat fitting garments. The Professor was an interesting talker and had very polite manners, but his face was so comical that it made Cap'n Bill smile to look at it. A great friend of Dorothy and Ozma seemed to be a machine man called Tik-Tok, who ran down several times during the evening and had to be wound up again by someone before he could move or speak.

At the reception appeared the Shaggy Man and his brother, both very popular in Oz, as well as Dorothy's Uncle Henry and Aunt Em, two happy old people who lived in a pretty cottage near the palace.

But what perhaps seemed most surprising to both Trot and Cap'n Bill was the number of peculiar animals admitted into Ozma's parlors, where they not only conducted themselves quite properly but were able to talk as well as anyone.

There was the Cowardly Lion, an immense beast with a beautiful mane; and the Hungry Tiger, who smiled continually; and Eureka the Pink Kitten, who lay curled upon a cushion and had rather supercilious manners; and the wooden Sawhorse; and nine tiny piglets that belonged to the Wizard; and a mule named Hank, who belonged to Betsy Bobbin. A fuzzy little terrier dog, named Toto, lay at Dorothy's feet but seldom took part in the conversation, although he listened to every word that was said. But the most wonderful of all to Trot was a square beast with a winning smile, that squatted in a corner of the room and wagged his square head at everyone in quite a jolly way. Betsy told Trot that this unique beast was called the Woozy, and there was no other like him in all the world.

Cap'n Bill and Trot had both looked around expectantly for the Wizard of Oz, but the evening was far advanced before the famous little man entered the room. But he went up to the strangers at once and said:

"I know you, but you don't know me; so let's get acquainted."

And they did get acquainted, in a very short time, and before the evening was over Trot felt that she knew every person and animal present at the reception, and that they were all her good friends.

Suddenly they looked around for Button-Bright, but he was nowhere to be found.

"Dear me!" cried Trot. "He's lost again."

"Never mind, my dear," said Ozma, with her charming smile, "no one can go far astray in the Land of Oz, and if Button-Bright isn't lost occasionally, he isn't happy."