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TOTO'S MEMOIRS

PROLOGUE

“Obviously I see a lot of old people come in the store, but she was very, very different,” the clerk in the antique shop told me.

“Her face had a peaceful expression, and I could tell that despite her age, she seemed so very young at heart. Her hands showed the hard work of a farmer - you know, that rough weathered skin, yet she was graceful as she walked across the store toward me. She was carrying a huge, shiny chrome urn.

She placed it on the counter and told me she wanted to sell it. Then she started to cry. The tears flowed gently down her cheeks as she continued to stare at the urn. Immediately I asked whether she was sure she wanted to part with it. ‘Oh yes, it’s time. I know it will be bought by the right person, I just know it.’

I don’t usually inquire into a person’s private life, but for some reason I asked whether it was a special family heirloom. Drying her face with a tissue, she smiled and laughed slightly. ‘I guess you could say it was. My dog was so fond of it - she loved to look at her reflection in the urn’s polished surface. Sometimes she would growl at first until she realized she was looking at herself. My dog was so smart. No one ever had a more caring companion.’ Her face glowed with an angelic countenance as she finished that statement.

We reached agreement on the price quickly. I handed her the cash and she turned to leave the store, glancing briefly one more time to look at her special piece.

Now I know it was my imagination, but this elderly lady seemed to skip a bit as she departed.

By the way, she was wearing the most beautiful blue-checked gingham bandana.”

THE DISCOVERY

Anyone who knows me understands that I am a person whose life is driven by many passions: my passion for gardening, my passion for art deco collectibles, my passion for education and, perhaps most strangely, my passion for that wonderful movie, *The Wizard of Oz*, based on a children’s book by L. Frank Baum. It is these passions that have challenged, guided, and molded my life.

Why this avid fascination for *The Wizard of Oz*? There is a logical explanation.

As a child of the 1950’s, I grew up watching the annual television airing of the MGM classic movie. Like the autumn Miss America pageant live from Atlantic City with host Bert Parks, the spring showing of Dorothy, the Scarecrow, the Tin Man, the Cowardly Lion, the Wicked Witch of the West, Glinda, and the little canine companion, Toto, was that decade’s “must see TV.” I was so amused by that wonderful dog, As I sat mesmerized year after year, I always thought: “I wonder what Toto would say if he could speak?”

Today’s generations cannot imagine the thrill when a family bought its first color television set and could see the transition from sepia-toned Kansas to Technicolor Oz for the very first time. The word magical does not come close to describing the feelings experienced by both children and adults. In many American households, the annual broadcast was shared family time.

Throughout my life, my fascination with the movie continued. When I was a teacher and professor, I used references in lessons. Movie memorabilia is evident everywhere in my home, with the center of the collection being the

Oz bathroom. Kids of all ages love that room. It reminds us that while being chronologically young for only a short time, remaining a child at heart can last a lifetime.. Even the movie's opening message addresses that idea... " and to the Young in Heart - we dedicate this picture."

Honestly, I don't know whether my other adult fascination - collecting art deco objects - sprang from the movie or not. The Emerald City was radiant in its art deco décor. The set and costume designers' usage of deco motifs was so imaginative. They must have been inspired by examples throughout Hollywood and by the two art deco styled world fairs of the 1930's decade: 1933-34 Chicago's Century of Progress and 1939-40 New York's World's Fair.

My career passion in life has been education, and my teaching became focused on emphasizing the importance of REAL Heroes in our lives. I have been writing and speaking about American heroes for over thirty years. The great men and women who have made, and continue to make, the world a better place are heroes, and children and adults should learn about them and honor them. In my presentations I also emphasize the significance of honoring the "unsung heroes" in a person's own life.

A few decades ago I was invited to deliver the keynote address at the Eisenhower Presidential Library at Ike's annual birthday celebration. It is located in Abilene, Kansas - yes, Dorothy's Kansas. My talks were spread over three days, with a day's respite in the middle. Having researched antique stores in that part of Kansas, I used my free day to explore them and hopefully find some Oz items. Not that I need more stuff, but oh well, there is always room for just one more thing!

No Oz collectibles were to be had. A store owner told me that as soon as any dealer adds an Oz piece, it is sold quickly. She joked those items fly off the shelves just as fast as the Flying Monkeys.

However, there in rural Kansas, I found a number of art deco "treasures." To a true collector, things are not referred to as "stuff" - they are all treasures. One such piece, excuse me, treasure, was a fantastic chrome coffee urn made by the Chase Brass and Copper Co. in 1935. It was in near mint condition, not a dent or scratch on the metal. The inside was filled with

tissue paper yellowed with age. The price was slightly higher than I wanted to pay, so I left the store and explored other shops.

My mind though kept returning to that urn, and I soon convinced myself I had to purchase it. Not only was it beautiful, it also seemed to have an aura about it.

Returning to the store, I was greeted by the clerk, who with a broad smile said, "I knew you would return." I laughed and started inspecting the urn carefully. I felt compelled to buy it. How special it would be to buy this beautiful art deco piece in Kansas as a reminder of the honor I had been accorded to speak at Ike's celebration.

By that point I loved it so much I decided not even to ask the standard buyer's question, "Can you do better?" I paid the price as marked.

As she was wrapping my treasure, the clerk told me the urn had been brought in that very morning by a rather elderly lady wearing a blue-checked gingham bandana. She looked at me and said something I considered a bit odd. "You must be the right person." I was puzzled by that remark until she told me the details of the lady's visit. Her comment made me smile.

That night at my hotel, after a full day of shopping and buying half a dozen art deco items in Kansas (now that's amazing!), I examined my purchases. No doubt about it, the urn was the most unique. Its lines defined the art deco style. I stared at it and thought about the lady's tears. I pulled out the yellowed tissue paper to examine the inside and felt something nestled inside of it. Slowly I unwrapped the tissue to discover a small book in excellent condition with the following words on the cover:

My Memoirs: An Account of Our Trip to Oz - December, 1939

I wondered "whose memoirs?" My curiosity was piqued beyond words. Needing to see at once, I opened the plain brown cover and discovered the following inscription inside:

I dedicate my memoirs to the incredible people who brought to life L.

Frank Baum's tale through the film, The Wizard of Oz. On these pages, I will guide you through the entire story as it unfolds. You will learn the important role I played in that amazing journey. It is my wish these memoirs be published on the 85th Anniversary of the greatest movie ever made.

Then to my amazement I saw the author's name. There in bold letters:

TOTO



TM & © Turner Entertainment Co. (s13)

Thus, the world is now privileged to uncover Dorothy's story through the eyes of her faithful companion Toto. I have chosen not to alter Toto's reflections in any way. Every word was in the original copy I found.

I am forever indebted to that mysterious elderly lady in the blue-checked gingham bandana. My childhood question would finally be answered - I would know what Toto would say if he could speak!

WHO I AM!

Let's start with the most important point. Although everyone thought Dorothy was the key character in the story, in reality, I was. Please don't get me wrong. I loved Dorothy, but if it hadn't been for me, no one would ever have heard about that little girl from Kansas. Honestly, the entire story unfolded because of me.

Think about it. Over and over again it was "and Toto too." Well, it's time the story be told from my vantage point. It would be more accurate to state, "and Dorothy too."

Let's start this journey where it began - where people met me and Dorothy - the beloved classic film, *The Wizard of OZ*. By the way, didn't I look fabulous in every scene? My make-up in both the black and white (actually sepia) portion of the movie as well as in the Technicolor portion in the Land of OZ was extraordinary. Despite a tornado and all the other hazards, my hair stayed exactly as I like it. I love the bedraggled look because it is so chic! Kudos to the make-up staff. Of course, given my natural cuteness, how could they fail?

Everyone remembers when I was first seen. IMMEDIATELY! There I was, running down the dirt road with Dorothy. I actually preferred to call her Dot, but since everyone knows her as Dorothy, I'll avoid using my pet name for her.

Before we get to the incident which caused us to be running frantically down that road, let me provide information about myself. Like most stars, my life had a very humble beginning.

I am a pure bred Cairn Terrier and proud of it. As a matter of fact, I am a member of a litter of four! Yes, we can be feisty and impatient at times, but there are times we can be calm too. While all four of us have the classic terrier appearance and charm, we all have our distinct personalities. My two brothers were born first and think they rule the roost. Not so in my opinion, the last of the four born. Number three was the sweetest of us to be sure – my only sister. Named Dianalin by our farmer owners, she glowed. Her personality was regal, and I loved being around her.

We are all delighted to be diverse members of the Terrier breed, not that there is anything wrong with mutts. A number of my dearest friends over the years fall into that category, and I love them dearly. But I have one thing they haven't got - a piece of paper. At least I hope that paper exists somewhere.

When it comes to canine smarts, please don't ever think of a mutt as less than a pure-bred. Mutts are every bit as intelligent – actually more so – than their “papered” cousins.

Father's name was Otto. Yes, really, two T's and two O's. I was never sure of his papers since he was raised on a nearby farm and chose never to discuss his family. One point is for certain. I acquired my love for chasing cats from him. He could run after a feline for hours, never seeming to tire of the pursuit. Honestly, I never saw him catch one, but that didn't seem to matter. It was the quest he enjoyed.

Then there was Mother - what a saint. Very proud to be a pure bred Cairn Terrier, she was humble and never bragged to anyone. She was a generous, giving soul. I always cry thinking about how much she was loved by others - what a true measure of how to judge one's heart.

In addition to collecting blue ribbons at the county fair for Best in Show, Mom had another talent. She could sing. She would serenade us to sleep when we were puppies. I felt so warm and protected, as if I was falling asleep surrounded by a beautiful field of poppies. Mom truly had the bark of an angel.

Oh, excuse me, her name - Dot! She had the most adorable white speck on the tip of her nose.

Mom and Dad met when the neighbor three farms over had to sell his land due to the hard times. Dad told us their kids cried and cried when they couldn't afford to take him with them when the family moved, so they asked my Mom's owners to care for him. Emily and Henry seemed thrilled to have another dog on their farm. It was love at first sight when Dad saw Mom. We came along exactly 63 days after they met. We're sure it is just a coincidence that the gestation period for dogs is 63 days.

So there's my background, me in a nutshell. Sorry for the digression, but as they say: To know me is to love me. Now, on with the story.

THE INCIDENT

Life on the farm for the six of us was wonderful. We were spoiled by Em and Henry. Frequently we would be playing and Em would find us and bring us warm crullers. She must have believed we couldn't play on an empty stomach. The three farm hands, Hunk, Hickory and Zeke also adored us. When they had some free time, which wasn't very often, they loved playing with us.

Hunk was fond of inventing games involving us. What a clever thinker he was. In one of the games, he would hide us in a bed of straw. As we ran out from under it, we would scatter the straw. There was straw here and over there - it was everywhere.

In another game that Zeke designed, he pretended to be a large cat, like a lion, and would growl at us as we chased him around the pig pen. Honestly, at times Zeke seemed genuinely scared of us.

One by one my brothers and sister were taken away to new lives by strangers in old cars and with lots of very short people (I think they called them children). I became the sole playmate for my Mom and Dad!

Then came the most terrible winter. I'll never forget it - blizzard after blizzard. The snow was so deep we couldn't go outside for days. Dad became very sick and died. Mom couldn't cope with her grief. I remember how Hickory went out of his way to try to comfort her; he had such a huge heart. Unfortunately, Mom passed on too, and Hickory wept for days. So did I.

I was now an orphan. The loneliness was so difficult. The long dark and cold winter nights made me feel melancholy. I longed for a place where skies were blue and clouds were far behind me. I thought there must be a place where happy little bluebirds fly, and then would think to myself, why oh why can't I go there too?

Day after day, I spent much of the time just chasing my own tail. Then one day I smelled her wondrous aroma in the air and suddenly my life's real focus was about to emerge. That was the day "she" walked through the front door.

I'll never forget the scene (it should have been added into the movie as a flashback!). I was in the kitchen warming myself by the coal stove when I heard her voice, a young voice, a beautiful female voice. Then Em spoke, "Dorothy, welcome. We are so happy to have you come live with us." I scurried into the parlor to see what was happening. There stood this lovely young lady wearing a blue gingham jumper. Em and Henry were beaming broadly as they hugged and kissed her. "Please Dorothy, even though you call us Aunt Em and Uncle Henry, we want you to think of us as your mother and father now."

Dorothy seemed a bit nervous and tentative. I wondered whether she had been caught chewing her master's slipper. I wanted her to know it was okay, we all do that in the beginning, so I started to bark at her. Plus, I needed to remind everyone that I needed some attention!

"Now, now, Toto, no need to be alarmed. Our niece Dorothy has come to live with us." At that moment the girl looked at me and I stared up at her. She was just as beautiful as I knew she would be. **Yes, I knew.** And I knew that my new life was beginning. Just like my mother Dot, this girl named Dorothy would protect and love me. I jumped up and down gleefully; I

simply couldn't contain my happiness. She reached down and picked me up and hugged me. Her scent was heavenly - I sniffed her hair and began licking her face in joy. We were bonded from that moment on, and I felt as if I had been taken magically to some special place over the rainbow.

As spring arrived and warm days returned, Dorothy and I did everything together. We became the very best of friends. Many days I went to school with her and became the class mascot. I was literally the teacher's pet. What amazed me as our friendship grew was the feeling that I had known her all the time, but I couldn't have, could I? **Hmmmmmm...**

One day, as we were taking a walk, we stopped and sat by a stream. She started singing, and oh, what an angelic voice. Every note made my ears both perk up and relax at the same time, and the tip of my tail couldn't stop moving. Oh what a feeling! It was perfection. I became lost in the melody and started thinking about my Mom's lullabies when I was a pup. What joy, what rapture. While I know some dogs would have crooned along with their companion's singing, I was too enthralled to join her. She petted me as she sang, and every inch of my fur tingled with pleasure. I was so loved. Well, I think that's enough background information so that I can return to where the grand movie began - with Dorothy and me running. Remember how scared she was? She kept looking backwards to see if we were being followed.

Now, let me make this perfectly clear - I was provoked! My actions were the result of what I sensed was a direct threat to both Dorothy and myself. Miss Gulch's cat hissed and spat at Dorothy, and let me state emphatically, such actions were NOT acceptable to me. Not nobody, not nohow threatened my girl.

You see, that cat - whom I have nicknamed Gulchkin because she was like a miniature feline version of her owner - had the same nasty demeanor as Miss Gulch herself. You do know we dogs have a "second sense" about people. We can detect whether they are sweet - or nasty. We dogs - especially me - do not tolerate nasty!

Gulchkin's fur was matted and oily. Maybe it was my imagination, but her fur had a greenish hue. While my color vision wasn't as vivid as I wished, I

could see that her fur was similar to plants, and I knew plants were green. There was also a strange odor whenever she appeared, an odor that made me want to bury my nose in any old garden dirt pile. She was a lean creature, but had a very prominent nose for a feline. Personality wise, simply put, Gulchkin was wicked. I don't think I ever saw either Gulchkin or Miss Gulch smile. When it came to hissing, that cat sounded like a witch standing over her cauldron on Halloween night as she dropped rodent body parts into the stew.

Dorothy and I were strolling home from school after an especially wonderful day. She had won the class spelling bee. I was so proud of her. The teacher, Miss Hilda, stumbled over the pronunciation of the word philanthropist - she kept saying "phil...er...phil...er". My girl politely interrupted her and asked if she meant to say philanthropist, and Miss Hilda said, "yes, good-deed-doers." The class and the teacher cheered Dorothy as she met the challenge.

So there we were, skipping and singing as if we were on top of the world, when suddenly THE INCIDENT occurred.

Lurking behind a huge balloon plant growing in the garden, Gulchkin appeared to fly in front of us, screeching like a crazed monkey. Her fangs were glistening in the afternoon sun. She was ready to leap onto Dorothy. The fur on the back of my neck nearly jumped out of my skin as my survival instinct sprang to life. If I may say so, I acted heroically to protect my girl. That cat was a menace to the community. I began barking ferociously and bounded toward Gulchkin. Off she went, like the cowardly feline she was. I was in hot pursuit - there was no way I was allowing her to melt away into the surroundings. Into the gardens we ran, trampling the vegetables first and then Miss Gulch's prized flowers, including her lupines that were so difficult to raise in Kansas. Between the two of us, we ruined about two-thirds of the gardens. It was a chase worthy enough to be in a history book.

The next thing I recall was Dorothy screaming for me to come back to her. I was close to nipping Gulchkin's tail when I realized we two creatures were not alone. There, when I turned around to look in Dorothy's direction was Miss Gulch. She had simply appeared. She had a rake in her hand and hit me on my back. Yes, she hit me! The rake actually grazed me, but

nonetheless, this act of violence could not go unchallenged. So, I bit her. Yep, on the leg - and a good deep bite it was. I HAD NO CHOICE. It was self-defense, me or her, and trust me, she was not going to win this encounter. She screamed and bent over to grab her leg, giving me a chance to run to Dorothy. My girl scooped me up into her arms and off we scrambled down that dirt road as fast as her legs could carry us.

I managed to glance back as we were fleeing, and it was an image I will never forget. Miss Gulch discovered the damage to her prized tomato plants, and she began screaming again. Unlike the screaming when I bit her, this noise turned into a deranged laughter that made my ears ache. She began grabbing the squished tomatoes and tossing them everywhere. They splattered against the fence, the well and the house. The air was filled with tomato juice, creating a sort of red mystical aura. Red is not one of my strongest colors to see - but this red was so fiery, my eyes could detect it. Her voice was cackling with rage; her face contorted so that her teeth seemed to grow larger as the sound of the laughter became even more shrill. Even though we were a good distance from the scene, my nose picked up a strong smell of sulfur, like the odor of rotten eggs. Yuck!

Then, and I swear it is totally true, as I was watching her in this frenzy of madness in that red swirling mist, she vanished. She simply was gone.

Home, we had to get home where we knew we would be safe. After all, there is no place like home, is there?

THE ADVENTURE BEGINS

Safe at last. We felt so relieved when we reached the farm. Immediately Dorothy rushed to find her Aunt Em and Uncle Henry to explain THE INCIDENT.

Unfortunately for us, they were so busy saving chicks that they just couldn't pay attention. An old incubator had stopped working, and the peeps had to be moved quickly to a functioning one. Normally, these two wonderful

people would have dropped everything to listen to their niece. They knew Dorothy rarely complained. She had become like their own daughter, and they loved her dearly; however, those chicks would have died if Em and Henry hadn't worked quickly.

Dorothy was still shaking when next we encountered Hunk, Hickory and Zeke working on their chores in the barnyard. With her voice trembling, Dorothy explained THE INCIDENT to them. I was so proud my tail sprung to life as she explained how I heroically had rushed in to save her.

Timidity was NOT one of my traits. I did not back away in the face of danger, and I was ready for action at all times. Bring it on, bring it on.

Those three delightful characters did their best to help Dorothy calm down even while they continued working. They were three of the sweetest humans I knew, and I felt so lucky to be on this farm with them. Their daily acts of kindness to me and Dorothy enriched our lives.

I was amazed at Hunk's idea - just find a different route home from school and the problem will be solved. He could really think deep thoughts. Maybe Dorothy would have paid attention if she hadn't become distracted as Zeke fed the hogs. To continue talking to Zeke, she climbed up on the fence surrounding the sty and, well, there she went - tumbling into the pig pen.

I had been distracted by Hunk's comical "spin-around" reaction to hitting his thumb with the hammer, so I didn't see Dorothy climb up on top of the railing. Had I realized what she was about to do, I would have barked feverishly to stop her.

Zeke reacted immediately and rescued Dorothy. I too was ready to leap into action - again! - and save her. My jumping and barking would have paralyzed those porkers. In seeing Zeke's reaction after the rescue, I guess my actions would have paralyzed him too. My goodness, what a fuss he was making. He was just as scared as Dorothy. Hunk and Hickory couldn't resist that chance to poke fun at their buddy.

By the way, it wasn't the first time Dorothy had fallen into trouble on the farm. She was clearly not a wallflower. Why that girl would explore every

nook and cranny of the barn. She showed plenty of courage as she crawled along the rafters in the shed that stored the straw. I swear if that young lady had ever visited the zoo in Kansas City and had fallen into a cage of hippopotamuses, she would have thrashed them from top to bottom. She wasn't afraid of anything, not nothing!

As we were all catching our breath, Em showed up with a batch of fresh-baked crullers. AHM! Hey, I am here too. Excuse me, I was missed - again! There has to be a change in this routine. I knew everyone here at the farm loved me, but how about showing that affection through treats. Dogs do not live by hugs alone. Yes, the family was poor, but really, if you were going to bring the others some hot doughnuts, what's the big deal to toss part of one to me. Luckily I had the advantage of being at ground level so I could catch the crumbs as they hit the ground!

Anyway, it was at that moment that my nose started twitching and I began to sense a change in the weather. We in the canine world have incredible abilities that humans do not possess. Our sniffers are superb, our eyes are sharp and our ears are super sensitive. My senses told me a storm was clearly approaching.

After handing out the crullers, Em asked Dorothy to relax and find a place where she wouldn't get into any trouble. We strolled over to an old plow and sat there together. Ahh, my girl realized at last that Aunt Em had forgotten about me when she dished out the treats, so she shared her doughnut with me! Actually, after she took another small bite, she gave me the rest of it. Is there any wonder I loved Dorothy?

We thought about that special place where there wasn't any trouble - could it actually exist? I already knew that it did! Just take my word for it right now.

As she sang about that land mentioned in a lullaby she was remembering, I reached my paw to her, not once but twice. It was my simple way of telling her I would lead her there. Yes, I knew what was in store for us very soon. And her tender hug at the end of her musical musings foreshadowed our commitment to one another that would help us triumph. The adventure ahead would change Dorothy forever.

As we hugged, I was suddenly overcome by a sense of impending trouble. My nose detected a strong scent of sulfur, exactly like what I had smelled after THE INCIDENT. Also I could hear a creaking noise, like the chain of a bicycle that needed to be oiled.

There she was - Miss Gulch - on our property. Dorothy grabbed me, and we bounded into the house through the back door before she could spot us. As we watched from a window, we saw Henry open the fence gate for Miss Gulch to enter. I howled with joy when he let the gate hit her rump. Dorothy quickly told me to hush, but honestly, that was just too funny. Dogs are not good at stifling their vocal cords when they see something hilarious. Henry was a really gentle man, with gentle people, that is. Like everyone else in the county, he knew Miss Gulch didn't fit into the category of gentle people.

Think, Toto, think - my mind was racing. She must be here for something very important. This woman who owned half the county wouldn't just peddle out to our farm for some chitchat.

Can you even believe what followed? How dare that woman command Henry to put me in that basket! It didn't even have a comfortable lining. What a totally wicked action. I knew Em and Henry would never have agreed if Miss Gulch didn't have the sheriff's order. They just could not go against the law.

Dorothy was holding me tightly and stroking me to comfort me. Then that wicked woman reached out to grab me, but my girl refused to yield. Uncle Henry must have known I did not want Miss Gulch's hands to touch me, so he took me from Dorothy and gently placed me in the basket.

It broke Em and Henry's hearts to see Dorothy crying. If they could have figured out a way to evict the dog-snatcher, they would have. My guess is Henry would have dropped the house on her if he could have!

Was I upset and frightened? Not at all. It would take much more than a witch-like bicyclist with a big nose to scare me. I have laughed in the face of death, sneered at doom and chuckled at catastrophe. I had studied the

basket and its latch carefully before Henry placed me inside. As soon as I was situated in the basket, I began formulating my escape plan.

You see, my Mom's breed does not let anyone push us around. It was quite simple - we will be assertive and we will get our way. Period.

What did upset me was to hear Dorothy's sobbing as I settled down in the basket. She was thinking she would never see me again. I started crying myself when she proposed to be punished on my behalf. How sweet of her to offer to go to bed with no supper. I'm not sure I personally, oops - I mean "canine-ally," could have handled that sacrifice. When Dorothy told Miss Gulch to leave or she would bite her herself - well, let me simply say that turned my tears into laughter. Dorothy's strong stand on my behalf solidified my determination to execute my plan and escape quickly. Someday after I was free, I would return to that garden and get Miss Gulch, and her mangy little cat too.

So off Miss Gulch and I went, bounding along that bumpy dirt road. The escape was even easier than I had planned. Because of her maniacal desire to get me to the sheriff so fast, the basket was jostled and jumbled. The small latch simply popped open. I was prepared to chew through the basket, but I didn't even have to risk any danger to my delicate doggie dentures. Couldn't have been simpler, I must say.

For a slight second I deliciously thought about leaping on her, causing her to crash, and getting a bite of her other leg. However, I knew it was more important to return at once to Dorothy and cover her face with kisses, so I raced home.

I barked as I approached the open window to Dorothy's bedroom and then leapt through it onto the bed. Hugs, kisses and total joy from my girl greeted me.

What happened next made me a little muddled. I never expected she would announce we were running away.

I hadn't had my supper yet! Without a doubt, I can eat faster than I can run. Maybe I don't actually eat the food; you might say I inhale it. As far as a

scheduled meal time, that's a no-brainer. Without a routine, my life would have become chaotic, and Mom and Dad had taught me that to be successful, you had to be structured.

Anyway, we left home in a flash heading for who knows where. Don't forget, I had already sensed a storm brewing after we had arrived home following THE INCIDENT. Running away was not what I had in mind. We could have hidden in the barn for weeks until I devised a plan. Instead, this wild day just got wilder. One minute I was chasing Gulchkin in a garden, and the next I was in a basket on a bike. Now, I was off to see... well, who knew?

I still hadn't had anything to eat, except for that tiny cruller piece

As we crossed a bridge, I smelled a horse and saw an old dilapidated wagon tucked away in a small overgrown ravine. There were words all over the side of the wagon. My nose also picked up the scent of a burning campfire, which usually meant food was being cooked. Hooray!

Stumbling upon Professor Marvel's wagon was a welcome breather for us, not to mention a chance for my dinner. Lots of activity and excitement made me one hungry dog. Unlike Dorothy, who never seemed to eat much, I required a steady stream of nourishment. I knew I was being a bit rude by not waiting, but my eyes sent such a strong signal to my stomach that I could not restrain myself. Hey, one dog to another! I do wish the Professor had some mustard to go along with my delicious wiener. The yellow kind of mustard, I mean, because I am partial to anything that is yellow. It is a color I can see very well, and it somehow really made my heart skip a beat.

I finally had eaten my supper. Three bites - and yummy. Thank you.

Wasn't that soothsayer just the kindest of men? I sniffed about and detected a unique odor. It was a mustiness that I associated with someone who was a bit of a humbug. I recognized his prankish disposition as soon as I read the side of his wagon: "Acclaimed by the Crowned Heads of Europe." My guess was he had never even ventured out of Kansas. Well, maybe he had been in Nebraska since most Kansas folks attended the big State Fair in

Omaha at least once in their lifetime. Anyway, I could sense he was a very good man.

I could tell he clearly had a bigger heart than an ordinary person's by the way he helped Dorothy. My doggy sense guessed that he, too, had run away as a child. So he knew first-hand that running away didn't really solve the problem. He had surely learned one needed courage to face problems head-on.

I marveled at how smooth he was in setting the stage to help her. Yes, I watched as he looked in Dorothy's basket, and I knew exactly what he wanted to find. If my senses had told me he was a bad man, I would have been barking like crazy. Plus I may have bit him, although biting was not anything I enjoyed doing.

As he began consulting his crystal ball, I explored his wagon. It was charming but messy. Clearly this man did not spend any time dusting. There were books and decks of playing cards, plus cards with odd mystical-like symbols on them. A large mirror was propped against an old wooden trunk, and I thoroughly enjoyed looking at my reflection. Despite how hectic the day had been, every hair was still disheveled, just as I like it. I saw a family portrait, but it was way above my line of vision. What intrigued me the most, however, was a curtain at the far end of the room - of course, I had to find out what was behind the curtain!

While exploring, I did listen to his conversation, and I have to admit, he was wizardly. He never told Dorothy what to do! By creating images in Dorothy's mind, he led her to make her own decision. Masterful indeed. His guidance enabled her to think on her own, recognize her true feelings, and then have the courage to follow the correct course. She knew within her heart and in her mind she had to be brave and return home because Aunt Em and Uncle Henry would be heartbroken.

Suddenly, she hoisted me into her arms just as I was about to peek behind the curtain.

So, off we went again...with the storm clouds looking so ominous and getting closer and closer. The sky grew darker and darker, as if night time

was approaching. The clouds resembled a flock of giant winged creatures flying rapidly across the horizon. Then, some of those creature-like clouds swirled down to the ground to form a twister. Yes, it's a twister...it's A TWISTER.

People think a tornado is scary - how about being my size? The twister was so dark and threatening. We ran as fast as we could. Dorothy carried me most of the way. Approaching the farm gave us a feeling we would soon be safe.

Why can't people have a better sense of hearing like we dogs do? Dorothy really stomped on those storm cellar doors. I'm surprised she didn't damage her shoes. They were a new pair, and I loved them. To my eyes, they had a slight reddish tint. As she pounded with her shoes and screamed "Auntie Em, Auntie Em," I was also barking ferociously. Alas, no one could hear our efforts.

We were doomed. Dorothy clutched me tightly as we headed into the house and went straight to the bedroom. I'm sure she was thinking if we hid under the bed we might be safe.

Conk. It happened so fast I could not even bark to warn her. In an instant, I saw the window come loose and fly towards us. The window frame struck her head and knocked her unconscious. Luckily it missed me. We fell unto the bed, when ...

The wind began to switch, the house to pitch, and suddenly the hinges started to unhinge.

THE LANDING

What a trip! Dorothy awakened just as the house started rising and spinning.

We dogs can tolerate a great amount of turning around. Just consider those canines who spend endless minutes running in circles to catch their tails. This twisting and twirling, however, was tumultuous. Frankly, there was a tremendous thrill at first until I began to wonder how well Dorothy's stomach could handle the motion.

Dorothy realized even before I did that we were actually inside the cyclone! For a moment I had retreated under the bed; it simply was the dog thing to do. Unfortunately Dorothy didn't follow me. I quickly rejoined her on the bed and started seeing very unusual things even though we were rolling like a runaway tumbleweed.

Objects and people were passing by us. No one seemed injured, which was a relief. I simply could not resist barking at the cow - I had acquired that habit on the farm. Dogs and cows were rarely friends. The humans we saw were actually quite pleasant given the dilemma they were facing. They waved and smiled at us.

That is, until a very familiar figure came into view - Miss Gulch on her creaky bicycle. She was so smug about her devious deed that she didn't notice the storm, let alone the fact that I was no longer her prisoner. As she peddled just a little too close to our window, I growled secretly to myself .

That's when it happened! I thought maybe the spinning had scrambled my brain as I watched that evil bicyclist transform into a witch on a broomstick! I blinked my eyes three times to make sure I wasn't seeing things. Geez, I wondered what was in that hot dog I had consumed so ravenously at Professor Marvel's wagon.

THUD! Ouch! Luckily, we were unhurt, but why couldn't the house just ease on down? ? Nonetheless, as soon as all four of my paws were on solid ground I kicked into high gear and realized what was bombarding my senses.

First, when the house hit the ground, my ears heard a shrill scream. It was a screech so high-pitched that only my superior doggy hearing could recognize. Then my nose nearly twitched off my face as it picked up that horrible smell of sulfur, exactly the same odor that hovered around Miss

Gulch. Finally, all of my senses assured me we were NOT alone. I could “feel” the presence of others, and I needed to get a closer sniff to determine whether they were friends or foes.

Slowly rising from her bed, Dorothy grabbed me and her basket and cautiously opened the front door. To this day, the scene we saw is forever imprinted on my mind’s eye. We were bathed in beautiful colors.

I know what you're thinking. You think dogs only see in black and white. I'm here to tell you that I am able to see, smell, hear and even taste color, but usually only certain colors. However, suddenly, in this place, my color vision was magnified 10 times, or maybe 100 times! (Math never was my strong suit; my sister Dianalin was the mathematician in the litter.) This was Color with a capital "C"! It was as if a rainbow had exploded and shared its brilliance with every object. My hair was tingling, and my ears were at peak attention.

Where exactly in Kansas were we? Because Em and Henry were subsistence farmers without much money, we hadn’t traveled anywhere outside our county. Could this be Topeka? Kansas City? As we exited our house, Dorothy could tell by the way my eyes and nose were frantically twitching that I was disoriented but very curious. She must have felt as confused as I was. Suddenly, holding me tightly, she blurted out my name, “Toto.” What followed was a truly incredulous assumption, “I’ve a feeling we’re not in Kansas anymore... we must be over the rainbow.”

Good grief - my girl must have been bonked in the head harder than I had thought! What else could I conclude? Sure, the house had spun a lot and had landed with a thud. Sure, I had imagined seeing people and things pass by in the sky. For the first time in my life, I wouldn't trust what my nose already knew. We couldn’t have left Kansas. Right?

Wrong! Wrong! Wrong! After Dorothy set me on the porch, my ground level view confirmed her decision. Dorothy’s brain was just fine, and she was correct. We were not in Kansas. Nothing at all looked like anything in Kansas. My conclusion was reinforced when I saw a huge glistening soap-like bubble floating in our direction.

The transparent globe landed near us and then faded away. I saw the hem of a flowing magnificent gown shimmering right in front of my eyes. When I looked up, I saw a queen, or a princess, or someone very very special. Dorothy had learned about Queen Elizabeth of England in school and told me the tales of her famous court and Shakespeare stories with all the royalty in beautiful dresses. Could the tornado have taken us back in time? Yes, that was it. We were time travelers. Incredible!

Then the radiant vision spoke, asking if Dorothy was a good witch or a bad witch. I wanted to bite her right away, queen or no queen. How dare she think...WHAT? Was I the witch? That is quite enough, lady. I wanted to find my way under all that flowing fabric and really sink my teeth into her ankle. However, her voice was so lilting and soothing that it calmed the beast in me. She explained the reason behind her question by waving her huge wand and pointing to...

The BODY! Actually, all we could see were a set of legs and feet...and a truly spectacular pair of shoes. Those ruby red slippers were a knockout. I was so happy colors were more vivid for me in this strange place. I knew exactly what crossed Dorothy's mind at that point. Remember, I told you she was a shoe lover, and she must have thought, "if only Aunt Em would buy me a pair of shoes like those."

Of course, I had the best view of an obvious crime scene. Here were the legs of a female body. Duh, yes I know men also like fabulous shoes, but these limbs clearly belonged to a woman. Whoever she was, she hadn't crawled under the house on her own. Even a mouse who can flatten himself to fit into tiny crevices couldn't have found room between the ground and the house. So someone must have dropped the house on her. Here we go again - that sulfur smell, and it was so strong! Aha, it was coming from the body. Then it dawned on me - as plain as the nose on my face. The shrill scream I heard when our home crashed came from whomever this dead person was.

As I pondered the evidence, the beautiful lady from the bubble made a comment which led me to the answer of where we were. We had not traveled back in time to Elizabethan England. We had been transported to a land of witches somewhere outside of Kansas. The woman speaking

claimed to be a good witch. Her explanation was dumbfounding. There were two categories of witches - now that clearly wasn't what Dorothy had learned and shared with me. Glinda, the one talking to us, was a good witch and therefore beautiful and nice. The one under our house was a wicked witch, and had we been able to see her face, she would have been ugly. My senses were clearly being over stimulated. That's what I was already experiencing when Glinda added another startling piece of news - we were surrounded by critters known as Munchkins.

I immediately recalled my sensation upon landing that we were not alone - and I was right.

Of course, we dogs are almost always right - humans who accept that fact truly appreciate their canine companions know so much more than humans who don't.

My first thought was to escape. How could we possibly know whether they were good Munchkins or bad Munchkins. After all, the only "kin" I knew was Gulchkin, the evil little cat. What if the Munchkins were evil? What if they ...dare I say, hated dogs?

Moving slowly and stealthily, the Munchkins emerged from everywhere. They certainly did not appear to be sinister as they cautiously tiptoed towards us. My instincts now told me my initial fear was misplaced. These little people seemed totally delightful. What's more, they were just my size. I didn't have to strain my neck to look at them. That was a very pleasant feeling. I started thinking how wonderful it would be to live in a land of little people. To them, I must have appeared to be much larger than I appeared to Kansans. I reveled in this new larger-than-life identity I had just obtained.

I totally loved their garb. No one in Kansas dressed like the Munchkins. Everyone was in bright colors, and the shapes and designs of the clothing were in one simple word, FUN. I kept staring and staring, which I know was not polite, but I just could not resist their appeal. We dogs aren't into being dressed up, but if I had to wear an outfit, I would want it to be a Munchkin design.

The Munchkins surrounded us as Dorothy told the story of our arrival. They became overwhelmingly joyful, and everyone was smiling and singing. I felt like a celebrity and began wondering if my picture would appear in their newspaper. Maybe I would be on the cover of a magazine. A regal carriage pulled by two white horses arrived, and we were conveyed through a cheering throng to meet the town's dignitaries. Normally, I would have barked furiously at those animals, but because the horses were closer to my size, I felt no need to show bravado. I loved the ride, and felt so very important. Dorothy and I simply basked in the glory of our jubilant reception.

The Mayor and other imposing officials welcomed us and then informed us of the greatness of our deed. Our house had killed the witch who had terrorized Munchkinland. Therefore, His Honor proclaimed this day as one of independence.

While I did pay attention to the speeches, I also managed to roam through the crowd. These little people fascinated me. Some of their shoes were as fanciful as their clothing. Everywhere I looked I saw more and more brilliant colors like I had never seen before.

I could also hear some of their whispered remarks. They thought Dorothy was absolutely beautiful, and of course they were correct. Several - who did not know I was standing behind them - said I was the cutest little horse they had ever seen. WHAT? I thought to myself, well, at least they didn't think I was a cat!

What can I say about the flowers? I thought the sunflowers back home in Kansas were spectacular, but these blooms were amazing. I was very respectful of the plants, by the way.

I stopped roaming just in time to see the huge lollipops pointed toward us. Now that was a token of appreciation I could sink my teeth into with total delight. So many humans forget we dogs have a sweet tooth too.

Suddenly I felt like George Washington's dog and Thomas Jefferson's dog and Ben Franklin's dog all rolled into one mighty mongrel. Toto the liberator. I was so excited. Back home, Independence Day - July 4th - was a

huge celebration. There were parades in every town and hamlet in Kansas, and red, white and blue bunting was hung on buildings. Everyone went to a picnic. Speeches were given and songs were sung. There was food! Lots of food. I usually gained several pounds on that holiday because everyone was giving out treats. So, as the Mayor and the crowd finished heaping praises on us, I knew that the next event would no doubt be a bountiful feast in our honor.

Just then the party crasher arrived. Honestly, enough was enough. In this single day Dorothy and I had run away from home, been carried away inside a twister, met a beautiful good witch, killed an ugly bad witch and been hailed as heroes by an enthusiastic crowd of little people. Now, in a burst of red smoke, a truly evil looking witch wearing all black was standing directly in front of us.

Everyone except Glinda was terrified. Well, except me too. Bring 'em on, wicked witches or no wicked witches. I would challenge anything or anyone to protect Dorothy because that was my destiny.

Glinda was quick to explain to us who this witch was. She was the sister of the one under our house. Actually, when I looked at her ankles, I could indeed see a family resemblance. Once again, my advantage of being at ground level made all the difference in understanding quickly the gravity of the situation. The departed witch had dominion over the east, while this non-departed one held the title Wicked Witch of the West. To say she was upset clearly qualified as an understatement.

Her dramatic entrance brought the celebration to a screeching halt, which meant one really bad outcome for me - NO food. I thought about sneaking over to those three Munchkins holding the big lollipops and at least getting a lick or two. My stomach was in need of some attention.

However, as I was ready to make that move, an amazing feat concerning feet occurred. The ruby red slippers on the feet of the deceased witch were somehow transferred to Dorothy's feet. Could I even make that up? I am at ground level, I am seeing it firsthand - and not a clue how it happened. It was the best magic trick I had ever seen. My senses were completely

baffled. How could shoes just... never mind. The important detail on which to focus was how fabulous Dorothy looked in those shoes. Stunning.

One person in the crowd did not agree with my judgment - the one dressed all in black was fuming. Granted, red shoes with a black outfit - gorgeous. However, the red against the blue gingham - over the top.

The two witches started exchanging threats all because of the shoes. Really, was that any way for two grown witches to behave? As the argument progressed, I noticed the odor of sulfur intensified in the immediate area of the wicked one. Then with a dramatic gesture using her wand, Glinda won the day and told the other one to be gone. Wand trumped broomstick in that debate.

Naturally the wicked witch didn't just get on her broomstick and fly away into the sunset. No, she had to put on a show just as when she had arrived. There was a huge burst of fire, followed by billowing red smoke and of course, more unpleasant sulfuric odor. As if that didn't attract enough attention, she laughed and cackled in a bizarre, deranged manner. I had a *deja vu* experience. That red cloud, that crazed screeching - wasn't that just like Miss Gulch's tirade in her garden following her tomato toss? Hmmm.

I clearly had more excitement in this one day than I had experienced in my entire life to this point. Only one thought came to mind. Dorothy and I had to get out of here. I was hoping she was feeling the same way, and when she told Glinda that she was indeed anxious to leave, I sighed. What a relief to know our thinking was in sync. I started to think about how we would make our exit. We came via a flying house. It was obvious that Munchkinland was clearly not a place one could get to by a boat or a train. We must be far, far away from home.

I had it. These radiant red shoes would be our key to leaving. In her discourse with the wicked witch, Glinda said they were magical. All I needed to do was decipher the key to unlocking their great power. It had to be some special incantation. I stared at them, trying to conjure the secret words or magical move. Then it struck me what Dorothy had to do. The shoes resembled a pair of tap shoes. One day as a puppy I was chewing on a Sears-Roebuck catalogue. Thank goodness I had selected pages with shoes

on them. In the picture it showed a dancer tapping her toes and clicking her heels. Yes, yes, could that be the secret? Dorothy would simply...

Walk! What? As soon as Glinda said we would have to walk and talk to a wizard, I blanked out. My brilliant idea just vanished. I felt as if my head was full of stuffin.

Follow the yellow brick road. Really? Now that sounded like an adventure I would enjoy. Nothing was better than a long walk. The opportunities for sniffing were endless, so I'd be able to tell whether other dogs were also here - wherever here is!

HITTING THE BRICKS

OZ? Glinda told us we were in a land called Oz, and a mysterious wizard located in the Emerald City was in charge. I guessed he was their president. I had always dreamed about meeting a president, so I was excited to start the trip. Our president back home has a dog named Fala, and I think of him as my hero. He was always with his companion, and I was certain he helped make some important decisions for the President!

To reach the wizard and obtain his help, we had to follow the yellow brick road. She didn't mention how many miles we would be walking. I expected wear and tear on my paws, but who cared - we dogs LOVE to walk. Dorothy set me down, and we were ready to hit the bricks.

What I didn't understand was why Glinda couldn't provide more assistance. She seemed very sweet and was definitely on our side against the evil witch. When she waved that long-handled wand, magical things happened. Shoes jumped from dead feet to live feet because of her power. She had arrived in that large bubble, and I figured the two of us could easily fit in there with her. She could have just "bubbled" us to the Emerald City, right? I still thought those ruby red shoes held magic powers and could have assisted us.

Because I could not convey my ideas to either Glinda or Dorothy, we started our journey. I hoped we'd be home by dinner time, and Em would have my supper waiting for me. We started at the very first yellow brick and with constant reminders from many Munchkins, we followed the yellow brick road.

I knew I would miss those people who were more my size. They were so friendly and energetic. I imagined how hysterical their parties must be. Those girls in the Lullaby League and the impish boys in the Lollipop Guild probably did a wild jitterbug dance when the party was in full swing. Anyway, time to walk.

Well, thank you, thank you very much, Glinda and the Munchkins - follow the yellow brick road they had said over and over again. Don't warn us that we would come to an intersection of yellow bricks! There we were at this crossroad, not a single sign saying which way to the Emerald City. I was trying to sniff out a solution when we both heard a voice suggesting a very nice way we should go. As soon as I heard the first words, my ears perked up. It wasn't Dorothy's voice, so obviously we were not alone. Then I saw a scarecrow on a pole, but of course a scarecrow can't...

Rrrr, rrrr - I barked to let Dorothy know I had uncovered the source of the advice, and she turned toward him.

My girl almost always accepted my judgment, because I had proven over the years how perceptive I was. This time she was hesitant, dismissing my conclusion as silly. She simply forgot we were no longer in Kansas, where indeed scarecrows could not talk. They just hung around and hopefully frightened away the corn-eating crows by their menacing presence.

I had already realized that here in Oz, ANYTHING was possible. Thinking outside of the doghouse was one of my many strengths, and so I concluded quickly that in addition to both good and bad witches, Munchkins, and a wizard, indeed even a scarecrow could talk. We canines are far more willing to trust our senses than humans are!

Once Dorothy grasped the idea of a talking scarecrow, the conversation flowed freely. I was astounded by his willingness to reveal to us, complete

strangers, his mental shortcomings. Usually a person tried to conceal one's own inadequacies, but not this scarecrow. He seemed very eager to share the fact that he lacked a brain.

What flabbergasted me was how intelligent his discourse was. He could clearly think deep thoughts. Yet he could not accept the notion that he must indeed have a brain in order to think he doesn't have one. What irony!

He was clearly a victim of disorganized thinking. So I devised a plan to help him understand the logic of my observation about his having a brain. I would direct his attention to the intersection. Then, I would scratch the third side of a triangle in the field. Using that triangle, I'd show him that the sum of the square roots of any two sides of an isosceles triangle is equal to the square root of the remaining side. It will dawn on him that he did have a brain in order to understand the geometric theorem I would have just presented. And oh, how my sister Dianalin, my math sibling, would have been proud of me.

No sooner was I ready to start my mathematics lesson than Dorothy and the Scarecrow announced we were leaving. He asked to join us and Dorothy consented. I figured I'd just delay the teachable moment until we came to another crossroad.

His decision to join us made me very happy for a number of reasons. First and foremost, he knew which way to go. I was already beginning to tire slightly, and of course, I was getting very hungry. If we hadn't gone the right way, who knows where we could have ended up? Back in Munchkinland? Near a witch's home? Secondly, the Scarecrow clearly lifted Dorothy's spirits. We thoroughly enjoyed his antics when he explained what his life was like because he didn't think he had a brain. His personality was so upbeat. He made us laugh the day away in this merry old land of Oz. Finally, I thought he would be helpful if we ran into any problems on our journey. Off we went, the three of us eager to reach the Emerald City.

Oh, and the smell of his straw reminded me of the farm, and I found that odor so comforting.

Food - I saw food. Usually we dogs avoided most fruits; they never satisfy my hunger pangs. But I was so in need of nourishment that the notion of munching on an apple was very appealing. Suddenly my nose picked up that sulfur smell again. I looked around but didn't see anyone. Previously, that particular odor surfaced when witches - or Miss Gulch - were nearby. Could there be a witch in one of the trees? Could a witch have tainted the apples so they were giving off the same unpleasant odor?

I started to look for the source of the odor when... what just happened? The tree slapped Dorothy's hand when she went to pick an apple. Then the trees spoke - and said nasty things to my girl. No, No, NO! Unacceptable behavior. Guess what I did to that tree. It's what we dogs do frequently around trees. Yes indeed that's what I did. Ahh, what a relief.

What happened next was sheer brilliance. Our new friend taunted the trees by suggesting their apples were inferior in quality. They were furious at his snide comments and started bombarding us with apples.

I adored the way Scarecrow used reverse psychology to obtain apples. That strategy again clearly indicated a higher order of thinking. I simply had to make him realize he did have a brain because he was using it to solve problems ever since we met him. Curious dichotomy indeed.

A few of the apples rolled off the yellow bricks, and Dorothy and I followed them. Being on her hands and knees, she was now at my level. That's why we spotted a metal object at exactly the same moment. What in the world was it? I glanced up immediately and realized it was a statue, but my nose quickly made me reconsider that initial decision. I smelled a person. Not a regular human scent though. It was more of an unpolished rusty odor, like our old farm equipment that had weathered over the years by being left outside in the elements.

The faint verbal emanation we both heard confirmed my hunch. This statue was a man made out of metal. Just like there was a man made out of straw who could converse, and the trees that could talk, here was a man made out of tin who was trying to speak. Maybe everything in Oz talked. I started to imagine the fun I could have. I could wile away the hours, conferring' with the flowers, consultin' with the rain. Maybe, just maybe, I would get a

chance to talk while we were in Oz! My oh my, with the thoughts I'd be thinkin', I could be another Lincoln.

Here goes.....one, two, three... rrr, rrrr.

Curse it! Curse it! Nothing happened when I tried to speak. Wait, I just thought of it. When we finally meet the Wizard - unless my paws wear out first - I would ask him to grant me the power to speak. Won't Hunk, Hickory and Zeke back on the farm be startled when I start chatting with them.

I realized I missed them! Although I knew we would soon be home, I began wondering if they missed us. They knew Dorothy and I went for walks along the stream, and when we arrived home, they would cheer and greet us like long lost friends who had been away a long time. What a trio.

While I was musing about being able to talk, Dorothy had oiled the Tin Man's mouth and he started to talk fluently. With more and more oil, he was soon able to move. He was ecstatic to be active again, and we were happy he was in perfect condition. However, he confided in us that he didn't think of himself as perfect because he was lacking a heart.

As he explained his tale of being heartless, my tail wagged with delight at his antics, except for the toots he made with his funnel hat! Didn't he know dog's ears are super sensitive? They rattled me a bit, but I quickly recovered.

He was really a sweet individual. For a man made out of cold metal, he exuded warmth. How could he not have a heart? His whole demeanor was tender, gentle and truly sentimental.

I found myself again in a state of confusion concerning these people in Oz. The Scarecrow repeatedly demonstrated his ability to think, but was convinced he lacked a brain. Our new acquaintance, the Tin Man, displayed so many emotions when he shared his story, but believed he lacked a heart. It was as if a curtain hid their true identities from themselves. I needed to devise a way for them to pay attention to what was behind the curtain. I got it, I would just...

Whoa - MAJOR sulfur odor sensation. Danger imminent. There she was - I looked up and saw her as soon as my nose picked up that scent. I jumped into Dorothy's arms so I could be right there to shield her from danger. It had to be the Wicked Witch of the West unless there was another sister we hadn't met yet. I had to give her credit for being true to her word. She was determined to get those slippers from Dorothy. Here we were - showdown time. She had chosen this apple orchard as her battleground.

How can I make it the witch's Waterloo? Yes, I knew of Napoleon's defeat because of all the history Dorothy had shared with me. Whenever she learned another wonderful story in history class, she always retold it to me. She explained to me that's one way she learned, by repeating the story to me. She had taught me about the priests of Isis and Osiris in the days of the Pharaohs of Egypt... and how Cleopatra saw the approach of Julius Caesar and Marc Anthony... and so on and so forth. I loved the history lessons much more than the spelling lessons because history was such a wonderful story. Think, Toto, think - there must be an historical parallel to draw upon for victory as we confront the menacing woman in black.

What was her plan to destroy us here and now to get those shoes?

Nothing, apparently! She did nothing except terrorize us. How disgustingly evil was that? She had us trapped yet made no effort to capture the shoes. I had positioned myself right next to Dorothy's feet and was set to lunge. Dogs are not scared of anything when their loving companion is threatened - courage is one of our main traits.

If I could leap high enough, I could have bitten her nose. I figured the Tin Man could then use his ax on her while Scarecrow could grab her broomstick to prevent her escape. However, none of that scenario happened.

Instead, I heard her say the word "ball" - which is a favorite object to any dog. Don't ask me to explain it, but hearing the word ball brings out every urge we have to run and chase and fetch. If a ball was thrown, we MUST go get it. We had no choice.

Oh no, it wasn't a ball at all - it was fire in the shape of a ball. She threw it toward the Scarecrow, striking fear in him and causing Dorothy to scream. As the Tin Man quickly extinguished the fire with his metal hat, the Witch cackled demonically and disappeared in that now familiar burst of red flames.

It dawned on me we were in for some extremely dangerous encounters ahead. What was the reason she didn't just grab those slippers and be gone? I guessed it had something to do with their power. Apparently, these things must be done delicately, or one could hurt the spell. Whatever the reason, I needed to be at the top of my game for the rest of the journey. If that Wicked Witch wanted a fight, I was going to be ready. Mom and Dad, you would be so proud of your son. Once bonded, we dogs were loyal regardless of the danger.

Since the Tin Man had decided to join us when Dorothy invited him, the four of us departed the orchard and hit the bricks again. It was comforting to me that they were yellow, as you may recall yellow was my favorite color. It was thrilling in every way to be skipping along them with Dorothy and two new friends. Well, thrilling except for two personal concerns - my stomach and my paws.

Our two companions had proven they would help me protect Dorothy. I felt reassured we would reach the Wizard because they were with us. I knew Dorothy was uplifted because she felt she was helping them too. She was a nurturing soul, and she wanted to see their wishes granted along with ours. I just hoped this Wizard was as powerful as Glinda had suggested.

I have never liked forests. Too many trees, too little time. It was an overwhelming and impossible task for me to do a good job of marking my territory. Back in Kansas, Dorothy and I had had a bad experience in a small wooded grove near her school. Kansas was not a land of forests, at least not in the part of the state we knew. Well, one day after school before we started for home, we decided to walk amongst the trees and look for wild mushrooms. Not to eat, mind you - that was way too dangerous as Dorothy had learned in a school health class. We were strolling slowly with our eyes affixed to the ground when suddenly an opossum dropped from a tree. I jumped 3, maybe 4 feet into the air. I thought it was a spook. I do believe in

spooks. I do believe in spooks. I do, I do, I do, I do, I do. Dorothy screamed and we high-tailed it out of that forest faster than a monkey could fly - if there was such a thing as a flying monkey.

Remembering that scary incident, Dorothy wondered aloud whether we would meet any wild animals in this forest. It didn't calm my nerves or Dorothy's when the Tin Man hinted there could be lions and tigers and bears in the forest. Oh my. We needed to get out of this area as fast as we could. We started to gallop when...

ROAR. Loud and clear. The roar of the King of the Jungle. How did we know?

Well, Dorothy had been to one movie in her life before she had come to live on the farm with us. She told me often what an incredible movie it was - filled with interesting characters, strange places, lots of exciting action, and a little dog too. That fact brought an immense smile to my face. She also said the movie started with the image of a lion roaring - she loved to imitate the roar whenever she told the story. So, we knew for sure - it was a lion we were hearing. Would he come for me first, or would I be dessert?

He roared and pounced toward us ferociously. We cowered, scared of what might happen. Wait a minute, wait just one minute. This lion was nothing more than a big pussycat. How could I tell? Quite easily from my vantage point at ground level. His nails looked as if they had been manicured! I did not see a single broken nail, and his paws showed no signs that he had ever been in a fight with any other animal. What a big coward.

I wasn't scared in the least. I barked at him to distract him from the Scarecrow and the Tin Man, both of whom were frightened. Dorothy was holding me as the Lion approached us. As he neared us, I was ready to lick his face to show how unafraid I was. However, Dorothy thought the Lion was about to hurt me - so she reacted by slapping him. I had never seen my girl hit anyone. She was the gentlest of people, yet all of her instincts led her to protect me.

I never felt so loved in my whole life. She had risked being hurt to come to my rescue. She had not yet grasped what I had figured out about the Lion.

At that moment, she truly thought I was going to be attacked by the beast, and she put herself ahead of me to save me. I was overwhelmed by her love, and by her bravery also. All for me, her Toto.

Did she know? How could she? I had been so very careful and so very clever to hide the secret of my identity. Yet, at that moment of physical danger, she responded as if she was indeed cognizant of who I might be.

The Lion's outlandish sobbing and wailing jolted me out of my innermost thoughts regarding my secret identity.

As he cried, I reached out with my paw to calm him. His reaction to the slap confirmed my assessment of his real nature. He was even more of a dandy lion than I had suspected. "Is my nose bleeding?" What a hoot. He was more a "mowess" than a lion. I did become more sympathetic as we listened to his saga of being a lifelong coward. I can't imagine myself living in fear of my own shadow. Fortunately, I always displayed vim and verve.

I hoped Dorothy or someone would suggest he join us on our journey, and indeed Scarecrow did. Once again the Scarecrow's ability to think was demonstrated. I was ready to tug on Lion's tail and pull him along if no one had invited him. Of course, I wasn't certain his tail could hold out.

So Dorothy and ...wait one minute. Three unique characters have joined us, and we left three special farm hands back in Kansas. My Mom was always good at remembering faces and voices. She told me it was a strong trait of her breed. Several times as I watched the Scarecrow and the Tin Man, I had had flashes of Hunk and Hickory come to mind, and now watching the Lion, I thought of Zeke. Still, no odors accompanied those images, so I mused it was all lack of food making me slightly off my game.

So, off we went, the five of us. I kept up with them as they skipped along the bricks, and all my senses were tuned in for another encounter with the wicked one wearing black.

There better be food when we get to the Emerald City. Paws, don't fail me now.

THE BIGGEST CITY EVER

YELPERS!! That was my favorite doggie cliché for when I simply could not believe my eyes, ears, nose, and paws. Not that I had any doubts over the past few hours we were not in Kansas anymore, but seeing the Emerald City in the distance dispelled those reservations forever.

What will it be like to be inside those inspiring spires? Will the residents be the same size as Munchkins? Or will they be much bigger than normal people since they live in such a big city? Will there be any dogs there, or will I be the very first four-legged furry fellow they have ever seen? Of utmost importance, will there be food?

When Dorothy said let's run, I was thrilled. All of us were so eager to reach the gates that we didn't even stop to smell the wonderful flowers along this final segment of the yellow brick road. An entire field of red poppies, laid out like a royal carpet, surrounded us as we raced to the city.

No sooner were we in the middle of the beautiful flower bed than something truly bizarre occurred. I fell asleep. The poppies were over my head, so maybe when they shielded the sun from me, my body thought it was time to go to sleep. I just conked out. Yes, dogs are quick to nap whenever we can, but not when we are in a full sprint. Honestly, in all my life, I had never experienced anything like this instant urge to sleep. Forty winks wouldn't be bad before we entered the city and hopefully ate.

I don't have a clue how long I was asleep before my face felt cold and I started to awaken. It was snowing. Once again, I was baffled. The flowers were in full bloom, the weather was spring-like, yet somehow it snowed. I saw that Dorothy and the Lion were also rising at the same time as I; they too must have fallen asleep. The poppies could not have blocked their sunlight - hmmm? Our other two friends were standing, and the Scarecrow was busy oiling the Tin Man's joints. Apparently, the precipitation must have caused some instant rusting. I planned on suggesting later to the Tin Man he really should carry an umbrella as well as an ax.

Suddenly I grasped what really must have happened. We had just survived an attempt by the Wicked Witch to prevent our getting to the Wizard. Yes, that had to be the explanation. She used the poppies to bring us to a dead stop so she could steal the shoes. I don't know for certain who had saved us because I had been sound asleep, but my guess would be Glinda. I felt she had taken quite a liking to me and to Dorothy too. She must have been determined to ensure we reached the Wizard safely.

Off we scurried and in an instant, there we were - at the entrance gate to the Emerald City. A feeling of excitement spread among the five of us, as well as one of nervous tension. Often when I get nervous and excited, I need to raise my leg. Fortunately, that urge passed quickly.

What exactly would we see when those huge doors swung open? Would the Wizard himself be there to greet us?

Dorothy rang the doorbell. A small window opened and a round face peered out at us. My goodness, I thought, from my low vantage point, the Doorman looked as if he could be related to Professor Marvel back in Kansas - possibly even a twin. The resemblance was uncanny. Then I sniffed the same scent of mustiness I had at the Professor's wagon. How odd was that? Anyway, he chastised us for ringing the bell instead of following the direction on the notice. It wasn't until we all asked what sign that the gatekeeper realized there was no notice on the door.

Hmm, just what are we going to encounter in this big city if he is typical of the folks residing there? It wasn't exactly the greeting we had desired. Maybe these city slickers didn't take too kindly to we country folk.

The gatekeeper's behavior was clearly baffling. He had heard the bell just as we had heard it ring. Yet he refused to acknowledge our presence. What if everyone in the Emerald City was as befuddled as this man?

Anyway, after we read the sign he posted about knocking because the bell was out of order - which of course it wasn't - we knocked. Stating we had come to see the Wizard led to his declaration that no one had ever seen the Wizard. Now I started to have doubts about our whole journey. I figured

there was no way into the city except by these doors. All of that walking and going without food led to this impasse.

Thank goodness my girl had the good sense to drop an important name - The Good Witch of the North. Where was the proof for that claim? Well, the Scarecrow told the guard Dorothy was wearing the ruby red slippers. Way to go, Scarecrow - once again you demonstrated your ability to think.

They must be the most famous pair of shoes in all of Oz. Indeed, I thought they were stunning from the moment I had seen them under our house after our crash landing. At my eye level they were even more over-the-top dazzling than humans can imagine. Even more, Dorothy looked especially lovely wearing them. It was the power they must possess that really intrigued me. The Wicked Witch coveted them and was obsessed with obtaining them. Now they served as our ticket to enter the Emerald City and see the Wizard. I was more convinced than ever those shoes would somehow play a role in taking us back to Kansas.

YELPERS again - what a scene when the huge doors opened. Regular-size, normal looking people were everywhere. They were dressed in clothing like I had never seen in Kansas. While the outfits weren't as hysterical as the ones the Munchkins wore, this city garb was certainly colorful and streamlined. The buildings too were awash in bright hues. They were designed with such interesting geometric patterns, nothing like the structures we had back home, well, at least not in Kansas.

However, I saw no dogs of any size, shape or color. I realized I would be quite the novelty and therefore garner lots of attention and treats. Oh, but if they had no dogs, then they may not know dogs need treats. What a quandary.

Just as I was contemplating how to educate them about doggie treats, a fancy horse-drawn carriage arrived to transport us around the city. Hooray, my paws get a breather. Wait a minute. Was I hallucinating? The cabby bore an uncanny resemblance to the gatekeeper, and likewise to Professor Marvel. There was that scent of mustiness again, much like the smell of an old coat found at a rummage sale. Could those three be related - maybe even triplets? I started thinking that was impossible until I saw our horse change

colors right in front of my eyes. So I reminded myself of what I had concluded earlier. Apparently anything was possible in the Land of Oz.

If only I could change colors. I would win every blue ribbon at every 4-H show in Kansas, and maybe even in other states. My fame would spread far and wide, and when I appeared anywhere, people would exclaim, “why there’s Toto, the dog of a different color you’ve heard tell about.”

When we told the cabby we wanted to see the Wizard, he hesitated at first. Obviously the city’s residents don’t just drop in to visit their Wizard whenever they want. Glinda had said he was very mysterious, and she was correct. The cabby then recommended we refresh ourselves after our long trip, so we next found ourselves at the Wash and Brush Up Company. Dorothy and our three companions were treated as royalty by the staff.

What about me? I too received regal care; the attentive staff doted upon me. They may not have dogs in the Emerald City, but trust me, these sweet people knew how to cuddle a canine and make him feel special. I was brushed and combed until my disheveled hair felt like silk. It had an iridescent sheen to it. ALERT: THEY FED ME. Yes, finally, real morsels of meat in a savory gravy. I ate much faster than I should have, but I was so hungry - and the food was so good. As soon as we get home, I need to figure out a way to get Em to make that dish.

We looked marvelous. I never saw Dorothy so radiant. From the top of her head to the tip of those red shoes, she sparkled. The beauty treatment also lifted her spirits. As for the other three, they too looked new and improved. The Tin Man glistened in the bright sun, and all traces of rust were gone. The Lion’s mane was magnificent and manly, and the Scarecrow’s straw was sharply spic and span. Honestly, he needed this make-over more than the rest of us. I didn’t want to say anything to the others, especially Dorothy, because maybe they could not smell him, but the Scarecrow was becoming a bit rank.

Speaking of odors, I immediately detected sulfur once we exited the beauty parlor. Everyone looked up, and there in the sky was the Wicked Witch herself. My nose couldn’t miss that scent despite her being high above us.

The residents screamed in terror as the Witch spelled out the order to “Surrender Dorothy” above their heads. Watching her write that phrase was interesting. Dorothy had learned cursive handwriting in school and was fairly proficient at it. However, I needed to give credit where credit was due, and making near perfect loops using a broomstick showed real talent. Too bad that Wicked Witch didn’t channel her abilities into more constructive avenues.

What amazed me at that moment was how few citizens knew who Dorothy was. There were five newcomers in their beautiful city, and one of the five was a girl. Dorothy was obviously a girl’s name, so it didn’t require a doctorate in thinkology to know she must be the witch’s Dorothy. Instead, they scurried like mice...er rats...to see the Wizard for an answer.

Assessing the situation as we accompanied the mob rushing to the Wizard’s palace, I realized the townspeople were completely dependent on their Wizard. It was as if he had liquidated their ability and desire to think independently. They had to rely on him, therefore insuring his control over them. Very resourceful. I wondered if he was a benevolent leader or a very bad wizard?

I reckoned we would soon know the answer because we reached the palace quickly. However, there was no reply forthcoming as we did not get to see the Wizard. Instead of his greeting the crowd, a guard told everyone to disperse.

When we were close enough to the guard, I was stunned. How can it be? He looked exactly like the cabby who looked exactly like the gatekeeper who looked exactly like Professor Marvel. All four had the same countenance. This guard had the same musty odor of the other three. By now, I knew that odor very well. Could they all be from the same litter? I didn’t know humans could have that many children in a litter. Or was there a clever charade being played out by a single man. If so, what was he hiding?

Once again, dropping the right name at the right time brought results. Remember how the city gatekeeper had given us entrance upon hearing us say Glinda’s name? In this case, it was the Wicked Witch’s name and her

use of Dorothy's name in the skywriting demand. The palace guard had no choice but to convince the Wizard he had to see us. The townspeople had demonstrated their fear, and surely the Wizard would appease them by meeting Dorothy. Ah, but what if he permitted only Dorothy to enter? No way would I have agreed to that solution. All five of us had to be admitted. Far too many bizarre happenings had occurred since we had landed in Oz, so I was not about to allow Dorothy to face a wizard by herself. I'll go in there for Dorothy... guard or no guard. Of course, I wasn't convinced we would ever see the Wizard, as he seemed to avoid problems rather than solve them.

Our three companions obviously didn't share my reservations. They were confident when the guard stated he would announce "you" at once that the "you" was plural and meant all of us. They began to rejoice that this mysterious wizard would bestow upon them the brains, heart, and courage they sought. The Lion especially got carried away with the image of himself as the true King of the Forest. All of us humored him with a pretend coronation during which he regally announced how courage would transform him.

During the fun, I took some time to sniff around the palace grounds. Maybe there were clues to help me understand this musty odor I have now encountered 3 times in the Emerald City. Unfortunately, I found nothing to help me solve the puzzle. I did find a very private spot where I could make myself feel much less full from all that food I had just eaten.

As the make-believe pageantry came to an end, I could see that it had helped Dorothy relax. She was about to meet THE Wizard. Glinda had made it clear he was the only one who could help us return home. I knew she would give anything to get out of Oz altogether, but was he a clever enough wizard to manage it?

The palace door opened and the guard appeared, musty odor and all. Here we go. We looked grand from the make-over, and I was well-fed and now more comfortable. The moment of triumph was at hand.

UNBELIEVABLE? Was this announcement a joke? The Wizard said go away. No, no, no. My first reaction was to bark at the guard and send him right back in there to tell his boss we would not go away until we met him.

Then, I started to hatch a plan. I was prepared to hide under his uniform and sneak in with him. Once inside I would start such a ruckus that the Wizard would have no choice but to see Dorothy and our friends.

As I was set to execute my brilliant plan, Dorothy started to cry. I couldn't leave her. She needed me, so I sat at her feet to comfort her. She was so upset as she realized we might never get back to Kansas. We might never see Aunt Em again. Then it dawned on me why my girl was sobbing. Professor Marvel had told Dorothy that he had seen Aunt Em place her hand on her heart and drop down on the bed. Now, desperate to get home, Dorothy uttered words I had not even considered. She believed Em might be dying. My dear girl had been carrying that heavy burden while enduring all the trials and tribulations we were facing here in Oz.

At this critical moment, I could have revealed the secret I was keeping from her, but the oath I had taken came flashing into my mind. My identity could only be revealed when there was absolutely no other option, and I knew there was still the

The shoes! Yes, that's it. Those ruby red slippers were her support. Somehow the shoes secured her safety and sanity. I was now totally convinced those shoes would make us invincible. How could I make Dorothy realize how powerful those shoes must be?

As I comforted Dorothy and pondered our next strategy, an unexpected twist happened - again, by dropping the right name at the right time. The palace guard, who had opened a small window and was watching as Dorothy cried, began to sob also. Tears flowed down his face in a torrent. He announced he too had an aunt named Em and loved her dearly. He couldn't bear to hear Dorothy's tale and see her cry. Low and behold, the palace doors swung open. We were literally ... off to see the Wizard.

I thought about our three friends and the idea we would soon be leaving them, never to see them again. Ever since the Lion joined us on our journey, I had found him to be the most endearing of our three fellow travelers. I knew Dorothy was partial to the Scarecrow, probably because he was the first of the trio we had met. I guessed that when we did leave Oz, she would

miss him the most of all. The Tin Man was sweet, but it was the Lion's antics and personality that made him my favorite.

Now, hand-in-hand our journey to meet the Wizard was coming to an end as we walked down the corridor of the great chamber. So many emotions flooded my head. I was certain the other four felt similar stirrings. We were all shaking a bit, while the Lion was trembling a lot. When he pulled his own tail and screamed, I was amused in a way that broke the tension for me. Everyone tried to calm him, but he was clearly the most terrified of all of us. Slowly and deliberately, we approached THE WIZARD.

Last time I will use it, I promise - YELPERS! When the corridor doors swung open, I experienced a sight that probably no other dog has ever witnessed. I was looking at a real genuine wizard. His gigantic head hovered above a huge throne, with flames shooting out of urns by his side.

Impressive, yes. Scary? Not to me. I mean the scene was exciting, with lots of loud noise and fire and lights. The reason it didn't frighten me (usually loud noises and fire would) was that it seemed to be an illusion. It had a surreal quality to it. As the four shared their requests with the Wizard, I began to survey the chamber.

Unfortunately, the smoke and fire dulled all of my senses. My eyes blinked every time the fiery urns erupted, so my ability to see details in the room was diminished. The Wizard's voice was so deafening that I couldn't pinpoint the exact location from which it was emanating. Was he behind the throne? Of course my nose's ability was drastically compromised by all the smoke from the flames. I was beginning to get very frustrated until my sniffer finally adjusted once the smoke billowed upwards and left the floor level clear.

What I smelled next defied understanding. Faint at first, the odor gained strength as I placed my nose directly at ground level and moved a few feet. The guard had disappeared, so it couldn't be his scent. But there it was, now getting stronger and stronger. It was the very same smell as the guard, the cabby, the gatekeeper, and Professor Marvel. Well, bust my buttons... I think I knew what was actually happening here. It was...

“I said ‘GO!’” The Lion took off faster than I have ever seen a creature move. We rushed after him to try to stop him, but before we could catch him and grab him, he crashed through the window of the palace door. Luckily, his thick fur prevented any injury.

Had I heard what I thought I heard while my senses were trying to scan the surroundings in front of the Wizard? The beneficent Wizard was going to grant all four requests? First we had to prove ourselves to him by performing a very small task.

Was he serious? Bring him the broomstick of the Witch of the West! It was the Tin Man’s remark that to get it we would have to kill her and the Lion’s add-on that she might kill us first that led the Wizard to explode in rage and eject us.

Well, clearly it was going to be up to me to accomplish the goal. I knew for certain the success of the mission depended on me. I was ready. I would do it for Dorothy. Failure was not an option. Off we went to find the witch’s castle and capture her broomstick.

A quick snack before we set out would have been nice, but everyone decided we just needed to set about our task. I was ready to use all my canine cunning to capture that broomstick.

THE QUEST

I haven’t quite figured out what’s behind the Wizard’s demand. If he was as powerful as everyone in OZ believed him to be, then why couldn’t he obtain the broomstick through his own devices. Hmmmm, something doesn’t jive here, but I can’t seem to put my paw on it just yet. I’ll devote my nap time to solving the mystery, but now off we go.

Traveling the yellow brick road was a lot easier than hiking the treacherous trail to the Wicked Witch’s castle. When we came to the woodsy area called the Haunted Forest, we knew danger was lurking ahead of us.

It reminded me of a very scary book Dorothy had read in school. It was about a headless horseman and his mysterious rides. I was fully expecting something as bizarre as that event when suddenly the Tin Man flew into the air and came crashing down to earth. Fortunately he wasn't hurt, but all of us - and especially the Lion - were rattled. I couldn't help but chuckle when he repeated over and over again his belief in spooks - it was his way I guessed of warding off the evil spirits. And I hoped it worked!

It had to be the Witch's doing, was what I figured. Oddly, though, there was a scent of sulfur in the air, despite a sign indicating her castle was still a mile away. Her powers to control reached quite a distance. Aha, that explained the poppy field siesta we had experienced. We were dealing with a power far greater than we had imagined, so I knew it would take the best of all of us to defeat her.

YELPERS- last time, I promise. Dozens of flying monkeys descended en masse upon us. YES, flying monkeys! I had never heard anyone in my life mention such a creature, but now I was seeing them. They attacked everyone but me. The poor Scarecrow was "de-strawed" and strewn all over. We watched helplessly as two of the winged critters picked up Dorothy and flew away. I barked as ferociously as I could to protest and to let Dorothy know I would come to save her. Suddenly, one of those winged beasts swooped down and grabbed me - and off we went to follow Dorothy.

I surmised we were being transported to the Witch's castle, and I was correct. As we flew over the rugged landscape, I studied it carefully. I would need to know the terrain for our escape route. Escape we would. Castles always have hidden passages. I had learned about castles when I was attending school with Dorothy. Certainly, I never imagined I would get to go to a castle, but then again, I never imagined anything like what had been happening. My keen senses would enable me to locate the secret hallways for Dorothy and me to flee. My plan was to then locate our three companions and return to the Emerald City. We would raise an army and lead them back to conquer the castle and capture the broomstick.

As we were being airlifted, I was able to glance back to the Haunted Forest. Our three friends had survived the monkey onslaught. I saw the Tin Man and the Lion restuffing the Scarecrow, so I knew they would be okay. I trust

they realized I would do everything I caninely could to save Dorothy - and that I would be successful.

The castle was a terrifying sight to behold. Shrouded not just in the darkness of night, it was also surrounded by an eerie aura of doom and gloom. It was huge, far larger than I had imagined. Then I spotted what I had hoped not to see - a moat. That waterway would certainly be a challenge, but I would figure a way for Dorothy and me to cross it. There had to be a bridge of some sort by which humans crossed that moat to enter and exit the fortress.

As soon as we landed, we were whisked away to the Witch's chamber - and there she was. The stench was overwhelming. No wonder she had no friends! I wondered how the monkeys and guards could tolerate it. Maybe only dogs and good witches could detect it, because other than Glinda, no one else in OZ had mentioned the odor. Curious indeed!

THE WITCH PICKED ME UP!!! Every part of my instinct wanted to bite her. I was so close to her humungous nose. The temptation to sink my teeth into it was so strong. But I realized if I gave into that urge she might harm Dorothy. Or kill me. Or kill both of us in a fit of rage. So, I'd bide my time, my Ugly!

Every nerve in my body bristled when she actually petted me. Her hands were icy cold. They were as cold as the ice in Em and Henry's ice box. What struck me as so odd was how she could feel so much like frozen water when her appearances and disappearances that we witnessed always involved fire and smoke. She would vanish like steam dissipated. But now her very flesh felt like frozen liquid, as if it were ice. Curious indeed.

In a flash I was shoved into a basket. Well, that certainly brought back a memory. The basket was identical to the one Miss Gulch had used to imprison me back on the farm; therefore I knew immediately my escape would be possible and actually quite easy. Dorothy began pleading for my release, and I was so touched by her willingness to sacrifice herself again on my behalf. Naturally, the Witch found the desperate pleas to be comical.

I heard the whole exchange, including the Witch's command to throw me into the river and drown me. At that point Dorothy offered the shoes in

exchange for my release. Oh my dear sweet naïve Dorothy. Don't surrender those shoes; they are your ultimate source of power. It was too late. She loved me so much she was willing to give them in order to free me.

Even from within the darkness of the basket, I could see the explosion and hear the Witch shriek as she touched the shoes. The sparks were intense. It was enough light so that I could see the basket's clasp had not fully engaged. Thank you, winged monkey, for being so careless. I seized the moment of confusion to push up the lid and leap to freedom.

Was it difficult to run from Dorothy when she was in such danger? You bet it was. But I knew my mission was to escape and return with help. Dorothy knew it too, as she cheered for me to run, Toto, run.

Run I did - faster than I had ever run before. Down the steps I leapt, heading to the castle's main entrance. My ears detected sounds of guards marching and chanting some bizarre phrases just outside the walls of the fortress. It dawned on me that the huge doors must be open.

Timing was everything. Indeed, just as I had guessed, the doors were open. There it was - a drawbridge, my means to cross the moat without getting my coat drenched. The winged monkeys were in hot pursuit, the chanting guards had entered the castle, and the drawbridge was starting to be closed.

Run, faster, run. My adrenalin was pumping. I was in high speed. I was racing to escape to save Dorothy. The drawbridge began to lift just as I reached it.

The most dramatic moment of my life was at paw. Can I do it? I HAD TO. For Dorothy. Every fiber in my being told me JUMP. Jump, Toto, jump!

Off I went into the emptiness of the space between the edge of the drawbridge and the rocky outer edge of the moat. Suddenly spears were flying by me, as the palace guards attempted to hit me in mid air.

I felt as if I were suspended in air forever. So many thoughts were racing through my brain - all the good times with Dorothy on the farm and at

school; all the love that surrounded me in my life - from Mom and Dad and all the humans; and of course, my secret identity - the reason why I was here for Dorothy.

I said to myself: fly, fly, now fly. Time stopped. Had I judged the distance correctly? If not, could I survive the plunge and swim to safety?

I was literally flying - until my paws touched down on the other side of the moat. As more spears landed all around me, I escaped into the protection of the rocks.

I was safe and I was certain Dorothy knew it. She knew I had gotten away and that I would return to rescue her. I also figured the Witch was growing impatient and frustrated over not getting those shoes. She would not wait forever so I had no time to waste. Just prior to my imprisonment in the basket, I had noticed a huge hourglass on a nearby table in the chamber. I presumed it was the Witch's way of timing her actions.

Never had I run so fast and been so determined to get somewhere. I had a clear image of the trail in my mind's eye courtesy of the flight with the winged monkey. It was an arduous trek, but my paws met the challenge. I felt like the mountain goats Miss Hilda had taught us about in a school lesson on amazing animals. Like them, I had to be sure-pawed and confident I would never fall. I reached the clearing - about a mile away- in under 4 minutes. Now that was a feat by my feet that I'll bet a human will never accomplish.

The Lion and Tin Man had just finished re-strawing the Scarecrow when they heard my frantic barking. Honestly, the Scarecrow was clearly the brainy one of the three. He realized immediately that I had come to lead them to Dorothy.

The next fifty minutes became an incredible mix of mayhem and miracles. My three companions had more difficulty than I maneuvering on the trail's treacherous terrain. I was speeding to rescue Dorothy, but had to hold back at times until they could join me. Humans simply don't have the vim and verve we canines have! With the help of the Lion's tail acting as a rope - and

my encouraging barking - they made it to the steep rocky cliff overlooking the castle. They were shocked to see how foreboding a place it was.

Even the Lion was facing the fact that he had to go in there to help Dorothy. I knew I was about to witness a true transformation. As terrified as he was, he wanted to save Dorothy, and his love for her overcame his fear. He showed amazing courage as he accepted his fate.

We had reached the cliff as the guards were ending their patrol duty. I knew we had to distract them so we could enter the castle, and I was about to jump off the cliff so they would see me and chase after me. In fact, as I contemplated that action, I saw 3 guards split away from the main force. Just then the Scarecrow announced he had a plan, so I deferred to his judgment. As he was about to disclose his idea, we were...ATTACKED!

Those three guards had somehow circled behind us and jumped on us. How did my nose fail to smell them? True, the strong sulfur odor hovering over the castle had dulled my senses, but it was clearly something I should have detected to warn my companions.

I redeemed myself for that failure by my actions. The fight was chaotic and exhilarating. My three companions were punching and wrestling with the guards. The guards' uniforms made it difficult for them to maneuver, so we quickly gained the upper hand - and paw too! When they were entangled with my friends, I nipped each one of the guards on their noses. They all had noses similar to the Wicked Witch's beak. I clamped down hard on all three proboscises. They screamed in pain as they grabbed their noses, thus providing my compatriots with the opportunity to subdue the guards.

Removing their uniforms and dressing as the guards was the Scarecrow's new plan, and I thought it was brilliant. Honestly, watching the Scarecrow, Tin Man and Lion get into those uniforms was a hoot. How they were able to do it so quickly was astonishing, but they knew we had no time to lose. I decided to chew off a red tassel from a uniform as a souvenir of our victory. Then I realized without Dorothy and her basket, I had no place to store it, so I had to abandon it on the rocks as we headed to the drawbridge.

In case you were wondering, the guards' underwear was red.

Disguised as palace soldiers, we marched into the castle. With lightning speed, I led my fellow rescuers up the stairs to where Dorothy was imprisoned. Was she still in that same room? Yes, she answered our question, and her voice was filled with elation. Once the Tin Man chopped through the door, we were all reunited. The Scarecrow handed me to my girl, and our sense of relief at being together again was boundless. We knew, though, there was no time to celebrate. The hourglass was empty.

Run, run, run. Down the steps. Faster and faster. If the drawbridge was still down, our escape was assured. Dorothy was holding me tightly in her arms. Yes, the massive doors had not been closed - freedom was in sight.

SLAM! In an instant, the doors slammed shut. There she was, at the top of the staircase, holding the expired hourglass. Our time had expired. I was certain the evil one herself had commanded the doors to close.

Her guards surrounded us. Were we trapped and helpless? Yes, but instantly I knew what I had to do. I would leap out of Dorothy's arms, scurry up the steps and attack the Witch like a crazed canine. The guards would come to her aid, giving Dorothy and the others time to flee. I would not survive, but I was at peace with that idea. For Dorothy is...

my destiny. It is why I was brought to the farm. The purpose behind my arrival into Dorothy's life would now be revealed. In some ways it was surreal to think that my seemingly insignificant small being was about to end such a significantly evil personage - but the sacrifice was why I was here.

So, for Dorothy I will ...

Hold on - what a clever diversion. Way to go, Scarecrow. What a thinker! When the Witch suddenly tossed the hourglass toward us and it exploded, the Scarecrow grabbed the Tin Man's arm. He guided the ax toward the rope which held a huge chandelier. When the rope was cut, the chandelier came crashing down on the guards. Brilliant move. Chaos ensued, and we ran for our lives.

But why UP? It's the number one no-no in escaping - never go up. Every dog who had ever escaped knew the rule. I could only surmise at this point the Scarecrow had something other than straw up his sleeve. But what?

Unbelievable - his sleeve saved the day and all our lives.

It wasn't anything he did, though. It was what was done to him by the Wicked Witch. Who was the hero - why, my girl!

Was it instinct for Dorothy to throw the water on the Scarecrow's flaming arm? Was it the shoes that led her to take that action? Was it me?

There we were, trapped in the tower and surrounded by the Witch's minions. Dorothy was holding me tighter than ever. The Witch announced our sentencing and referred to me as mangy. Oh, I so wanted to chomp her nose.

No one, and I mean no one, ever called me mangy. All of my hair stood on end. Now, readier than ever to pounce and take out that sulfur smelling big-nosed greenish woman in black, I hesitated.

It had to be Dorothy's triumphal moment, not mine. I knew she would save the day, for it was all predestined.

As the Scarecrow was set on fire, I fidgeted in such a manner as to direct Dorothy's attention toward a bucket filled with water. She saw the water. She acted. She did it!

Yes, I could have jumped into the bucket and splashed water on the Scarecrow to save him, but I knew the time had arrived for Dorothy to discover the hero within herself.

Did I know the water would melt the Witch? Indeed I did because it was no different from our farm pond. It made sense to me after she held me and petted me in her chamber. How repulsive to even think of that moment.

Her hands were ice cold, like frozen water. Yet when she vanished, it was in red smoke - as if she were on fire. So her real being was water and she vaporized into steam. What would cause her to die? Simple - if ice melts

before it can vaporize, all that is left is a puddle of water. So, hooray for Dorothy - her action melted the Wicked Witch.

The scene overwhelmed all of us, and especially my senses. The sulfur odor was wrenching at first as she melted away, but then the smell completely dissipated forever. My eyes could not fathom we were seeing a body melt away like a piece of ice melts. My ears were tormented by the horrific sounds and words of the evil fading to nothingness. What a world, what a world!

Everyone was silent, absorbed in disbelief. Was she really dead? Morally, ethic'ly, spiritually, physically, positively, absolutely, undeniably and realiably DEAD? I immediately approached her "remains" and saw only the hat and broom, and most importantly, detected no sulfur. Indeed, she was gone forever. Not only were the five of us thrilled and relieved, but so were her guards. My guess was they must have been captured and kept under a spell to serve as her henchmen. So, like us, they too were now free.

We won! In a little over an hour, the five of us had proven what can be accomplished as a team and stick together. Well, the five of us - plus those shoes. I was convinced they protected Dorothy.

We're off to see the Wizard - again! This time we were bringing the broomstick of the Wicked Witch of the West.

THE UNVEILING

Their feet and my paws barely touched the ground as we scurried back to the Emerald City. Everyone was confident the Wizard would grant the requests as he had said he would do. How could he not since we had fulfilled his assignment?

Well, I was not confident. Remember, I couldn't quite put my paw on the very uneasy feeling I had when we were in the Wizard's chamber. In a sense I felt like my Missouri neighbors back home: "show me."

This time our experience at the city's gate was far different from our initial attempt to enter the metropolis. The Doorman opened the small window and gasped when he saw the five of us AND the broomstick. In no time at all, the doors swung open, the horse drawn taxi arrived and off we went to the Wizard's Palace. The familiar musty odor from the cab driver was stronger than ever.

Word of our return spread like a prairie fire throughout the city. People began pouring out of buildings and cheered as we passed by them. All of us were waving and smiling. I was barking non-stop as I was so excited. No, the excitement did NOT cause a personal accident as sometimes happened for us four-legged beings. The Lion was waving the broomstick for the crowds to see. It was simply exhilarating, especially after the danger we had faced.

Arriving at the Wizard's Palace, we were met by the Guard. Now something quite puzzling occurred. His reception was far less enthusiastic than that of the cheering throngs. He actually seemed befuddled and perplexed. Also, need I say, the musty odor was now overpowering my sense of smell. I began to wonder why the Guard wasn't as thrilled to see us and the broomstick as everyone else was. Hmm, in dog lingo, this bone didn't pass the smell test!

Of course, he had no choice but to admit us. He entered the building, opened the doors, and then disappeared. Now that I think about it, that was exactly what had happened on our first visit to the Wizard. It didn't strike me then as it did now - shouldn't the Guard have escorted us to see the Wizard?

I was starting to put the pieces together about these characters with the same musty odor. And if my thinking was correct, we would soon know the startling truth.

There we were - back in front of the Great and Powerful OZ himself. His words suggested he was surprised to see us. That statement made absolutely no sense to me. How could he not know if he was so great and powerful? Our reception in his city had been tumultuous, so word had had to have reached him at once. Dogs know when they are being tricked.

Tomorrow! Come back tomorrow! Was he joking? We did exactly what he had ordered, and now he was sending us away.

That odor - that musty odor - was stronger than ever. I decided I had to find its source right now. Lo and behold I saw them.

Them! His shoes. I had the PERFECT vantage point - my eye level was the key to solving this mystery. Under a curtain I saw the legs of a man. As I approached the area, the mustiness odor overcame me. Then I saw him completely. There was no wizard at all - there was a man. A man clearly related to the Doorman, the cabby driver, the Guard and, dare I even think it, to Professor Marvel. Related to one another - or all the same man? Impossible!

What followed was quite frankly one of my life's greatest triumphs. THE UNVEILING. Approaching the edge of the curtain, I pushed it completely to the side, thereby exposing the man who was the wizard. There he stood - "uncurtained!"

My initial instincts were to bite not one, but both, of his legs. I was so angry, so disgusted by what he had done to my Dorothy and her three best friends. He had them risk their lives to achieve a goal which obviously had been important to his position of power in this land.

Because we canines have that special ability to detect a person's real nature, we can see right through a human. If a person is all smiles and sweetness on the surface but really nasty and mean underneath, we can tell. Why do you think we growl at someone who puts on a façade of friendliness when we know that person's true nature?

I knew the faux wizard was a very good man. I knew he had a heart of gold. So I spared his legs and allowed him to proceed. I knew I would be watching a wonderful wizard of words in action.

Dorothy took me in her arms as the Wizard granted the requests. He was masterful and confirmed my senses about his goodness. His speeches to the Scarecrow, Tin Man, and Lion were letter perfect.

He revealed to them they already possessed the qualities they were seeking. They simply had not believed in themselves. By simple small tokens - a diploma granting a doctorate in thinkology, a heart-shaped watch that ticked, and a medal with the word courage dangling from the ribbon - he made them recognize their own strengths. How truly amazing it was to watch them accept themselves.

I was reminded of Dorothy's incredible teacher back in the one room schoolhouse. That lady, Miss Hilda, was a gifted educator. I loved watching how she led her students to discover their own abilities and praised them accordingly.

As the wizard proceeded with his announcements, I watched as Dorothy basked in the glow of happiness for her friends. Then it came to her situation. My girl was very aware that he couldn't pull an object out of his bag of tricks to get her back to Kansas. Still I knew this clever man had something up his sleeve.

I knew it because of who I really was. To reveal my identity now would only diminish the most important message Dorothy had to learn, and I was not about to lessen that triumphant moment for her.

Since we had been transported here through the clouds via a twister, I figured he must have a mechanized means to reverse our flight. Of course, a balloon - a hot air balloon. I chuckled to myself that our conveyance back to our farm would be through hot air when it was the cold air of a tornado that had brought us here.

I hoped he realized I needed to eat before we made the journey.

Wait - indeed he did know! Prior to our leaving his chambers, when he went to gather his personal belongings for the trip back to Kansas, he directed me to a carpeted area behind the curtain. There, in silver bowls with the letter T engraved on them, were food and water. The food bowl contained a hot dog!

Dorothy was barely able to contain her happiness. She would soon see Aunt Em and Uncle Henry. Zeke, Hickory and Hunk would be overjoyed to see

her again. I knew how worried she had been about Aunt Em's health, but I knew Em was fine. That lady was one tough cookie, emm, cruller, I mean.

And me? Was I eager to return home? You better believe it. I needed rest. My brain and body had been working overtime. I lost count of how many problems I had solved since we came to Oz. To state it bluntly, I needed serious nap time.

Also I needed my regular eating schedule back. While this adventure was fantastic, these folks seemed to have forgotten that dogs like a regular daily routine. Aunt Em, have my food dish filled... please.

Our departure from the Emerald City was a spectacular scene. I certainly had never experienced anything like it. It reminded me of the pictures in the one magazine Dorothy had seen at school. A school friend's rich aunt had sent her a copy of a magazine called *Life*, and this issue showed incredible pictures of a grand Hollywood musical. It was fun to watch the girls pretend to be Ziegfeld girls at recess. In fact, that magazine spread led to quite an event back at the farm. Dorothy decided she and I would stage a show in the barn. We practiced for hours, and she put together costumes for both of us. Then on Sunday after church and our big Sunday dinner, Em and Henry and Hickory, Zeke and Hunk sat on a bench in the barn to watch the performance. Everyone laughed until they hurt as Dorothy and I sang and danced. Now here we were in Oz in a real extravaganza.

It appeared that every resident of the Emerald City was in the great square to bid us farewell, and why not? They were celebrating the elimination of their evil witch and bidding a "temporary" farewell to their Wizard. We were their heroes and they cheered and cheered when we appeared on the platform. What a moment. I truly hoped dogs everywhere would tell and retell this heroic tale.

The Wizard's final speech to his subjects was touching, albeit a bit hokey if you asked me. The Wizard knew he would never return, but was smart enough not to tell them. Again he was masterful in appointing the Scarecrow, Tin Man and Lion to rule in his place. Those three had the qualities which make someone a good leader: wisdom, compassion, and courage.

Saying goodbye to them was one of the most difficult tasks Dorothy and I have ever had to do. We knew we would never see them again. Too bad there were no photographers in Oz to take some pictures of all of us together. I know my girl and I will always have them in our hearts, and that's even better than a photograph.

As the crowd continued to applaud and cheer every word the Wizard spoke, I scanned the sea of humans to witness all their smiling faces. I wanted to preserve this picture in my mind's eye forever.

IT WAS NOT MY FAULT ! I was not responsible for some unthinking citizen who chose to bring her cat to this grand public event. What intelligent person took a cat to a crowded ceremony? Dogs, yes - because dogs knew how to behave when around crowds. Just look at how well-behaved we always were at dog shows. I had certainly never heard of a cat show. Ha! But since I hadn't observed any dogs in Oz, it was a moot point.

All of a sudden, a cat - and that little feline was just glaring at me. All I could think of was Gulchkin. Yes, it looked exactly like Miss Gulch's evil little fur ball that launched the whole series of events culminating right now in Oz. I had no choice! I growled loudly, bared my teeth, and off I went to get that cat. Dad would have been so proud of me.

A wild chaotic scene ensued. Dorothy immediately leapt out of the balloon basket and ran after me. The crowd gasped and then started screaming. In the confusion the Scarecrow, Tin Man and the Lion fumbled with the balloon's tethers, trying to reconnect the ropes to keep the balloon from rising. But it was all in vain. Just as Dorothy grabbed me, the balloon ascended - without us in it.

How did I feel? Actually, my emotions were mixed. Yes, our departure plans were botched, but I knew one critical factor that everyone else didn't grasp. Dorothy still had those shoes.

Throughout the entire adventure, I knew the power of the ruby red slippers. Because they were the focus of everyone's attention, they must indeed have possessed special magical powers. All I needed to do was to get Dorothy to

realize their potency. There had to be a way to make her aware she had the resource at hand to take us home. I knew if she danced, or jumped, or tapped them together, their power would be released. However, that power was dependent on learning the lesson.

YELPERS for the very last time. Just when I was certain Dorothy would lose all hope, Glinda approached in her bubble. The solution was at hand, and it played out just as I knew it would.

Like the Wizard with helping our three friends discover their inner worth, so too did Glinda perform the same “magic” with Dorothy. Glinda, you were magnificent. Brilliant. Why, I could not have done it better myself even if I could have talked.

With kindness and compassion, Glinda guided Dorothy to find the happiness within herself. She was not given the answer to the question of how to return home. Instead, she was asked by the Good Witch to tell us what she had learned from this adventure. How beautiful for me to watch Dorothy learn the meaning of contentment in life. I shed some sincere doggie tears at that moment. It was the fulfillment of my mission.

I reflected for a moment on the lesson that I wished could be conveyed to everyone back in Kansas. Dorothy’s eyes were opened when she was handled with love and respect. Isn’t that how humans should always treat each other? Isn’t that how humans should always treat their dogs? Oh, okay and their cats too!

So yes, I was right about the shoes all along, but I was not going to be overly boastful as we set to leave. Why not? Well, it now dawned on me that had Dorothy tapped them earlier, absolutely nothing would have happened. Their power was to be unlocked only after Dorothy learned life’s meaning. Now, since that revelation had occurred, the time was at hand for Dorothy to tap her heels together and take us home. There’s no place like home, is there?

HOME

Amazing, wasn't it? There was our house - still standing. There were Em and Henry, not looking a day older. The three farmhands looked as happy and carefree as ever. Even Professor Marvel had found his way to our home to check on Dorothy.

Of course, ME, too. Me - the cause of it all. Me - the solver of all the problems. Me - Dorothy's guardian angel !

I had been sent to the farm so this very adventure could play out to help Dorothy find one of life's most important messages.

Illness took her mother from her while Dorothy was still a child. A bell rang and another angel got its wings. It is through Toto that my role as Dorothy's guardian angel would be fulfilled. I would help her discover herself. After all, that's what a good mother does.

The lesson I had to guide her towards? That she had to find for herself? Quite simple, isn't it?

Happiness comes from within. From one's own backyard. It's there, within one's self. You are always home when you recognize your own inner goodness. Only then can you share it with others. What a world, what a world... it would be if all people could discover for themselves what Dorothy discovered for herself.

While the beauty of the brilliant colors had vanished when we left OZ, the brilliance of everyone's inner beauty was now far greater.

So, your question: was it all real? Did I stage the whole story? I remember being in the classroom with Dorothy the day the teacher read a famous passage from the incomparable Bard of Avon: "All the world's a stage,..."

TOTO