

The Lizard of Oz

Playscript

by Richard Seltzer

This playscript is based on the book *The Lizard of Oz* by Richard Seltzer, and adapted for the stage by Kathy Smith and students at the Alternative Elementary School, Sharon, MA, together with Richard Seltzer

Illustrations by Christin Couture

For the complete text of the book on which this play is based, with audio narration by the author, go to <http://www.samizdat.com/liz>

For other material related to this story, go to <http://www.samizdat.com/readers.html#lizard>

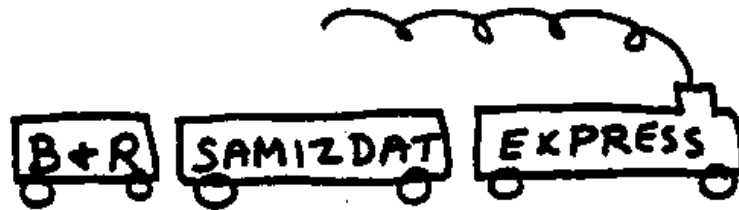
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Foreword

Kathy Smith and the Alternative Elementary School in Sharon, MA, developed a stage adaptation of my book The Lizard of Oz for their production last year. I polished and trimmed their working script, in collaboration with Kathy, to arrive at the present version.

The cast of the Sharon production ranged in age from 5½ to 12. They put on 9 performances to capacity audiences. Their production lasted 50 minutes, but held the attention of audiences ranging in age from kindergarteners to parents. In the words of Kathy, "There wasn't a kid who wasn't enthralled.: Some kids came back to see it as many as 4 times.

The present version should run about 45 minutes. It could be performed with a minimum of about 16 up to 25 or more kids. (There are very few children's plays that can involve a whole class and give them lines, as this one can.)

Since a number of people have requested copies of the play and have expressed interest in possibly performing it, we wanted to have it published. And since there are no established publishers who handle children's plays of this length, we decided to do so ourselves so we could make copies available at a reasonable price.

This play is royalty-free for admission-free performances. But if you charge for admission, we require payment of a royalty of 10% of gross receipts.

We'd appreciate your comments and any feedback on your experiences in performing this play. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to call or write. You can reach me by email at seltzer@samizdat.com

Best wishes,

Richard Seltzer

Production Notes

The class consists of 7 or more kids and 2 teachers. These kids move through a series of vignettes, meeting new characters about every 3 minutes. The kids should react to these bit characters with exaggerated enthusiasm and intense concentration. Suggested lines are given in the script, but, to a large extent, the kids should improvise, saying what feels natural to them given the situation, rather than memorizing lots of set speeches. This flexibility makes it possible for relatively young kids to work with this relatively long (about 40 minutes) script. (The cast in the Sharon production ranged in age from 5½ to 12).

The bit characters move on stage, have their piece to say, and move off again. One person can have 3 or 4 such bit parts. (The Sharon production involved 16 actors). Or a whole class of 25 or more could be involved, all having lines to speak.

For the most effective production, use the whole room, not just the stage. The script assumes a relatively flexible auditorium/gym space -- with a few scenes that require props (e.g., classroom and library) taking place on stage, but much of the action taking place in front of the stage around "the little green VW" (cardboard sides cut to shape and painted). Sometimes, as indicated in the script, characters should enter from behind the audience, using the center aisle.

The name of the town should be changed to make it local. The director should also feel free to add incidental mentions of the school's name and local landmarks and streets at the beginning and at the end when the class returns home.

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Characters: 26 male or female, plus extras as desired (one actor can have several bit roles; minimum cast = about 16); also 3 puppets

Playing Time: 40 minutes

Costumes: Kids and teachers -- modern everyday attire; Donny -- wears glasses; Witch -- typical Halloween witch dress; potheads -- cardboard flowerpots cover head; Sir Real -- cardboard cereal bowl covers head; eggheads -- costumes suggest sunnyside-up eggs, scrambled eggs, hardboiled eggs, etc.; Humpty Dumpty -- looks like big cracked hardboiled egg; Mr. Bacon -- looks like big piece of bacon; Mr. Charon -- rough rags of a ferryboatman; Lewis Carroll -- underwear; Mr. Plato -- ancient Greek garb; Mr. Shermin (as teacher) -- modern everyday attire; Joan of Noah's Ark -- dressed in medieval armor with shield and huge toothbrush; Captain Ahab -- sea captain duds, with one wooden leg; astronaut -- space suit; chained person, praying person, and person in pain -- ordinary clothes or diverse costumes.

Puppets: 2 fish puppets (Mr. Shermin & Mrs. O'Rourke) and one blue flower puppet (Wallflower). These could consist of cardboard cutouts attached to sticks. When speaking, they bob up and down.

Properties: classroom furniture, rectangular frame simulating an aquarium, little green VW (cardboard cut to shape and painted forms the sides), witch's broom with bucket for a seat, sign that reads "Potable Water", water fountain with water, cardboard wall for Wallflower, bicycle covered over with aluminum foil and tinsel to look like icicles and with wheels decorated to look like sunflowers, interior of library (rearranged classroom furniture), books, back pack, cotton balls, paper flowers, ferryboatman's long pole, sunglasses, flashlight decorated like stick (serves as

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"torch"), slices of bread, whale's big wide open mouth with one big tooth, bush with tinsel (to look like burning bush), big painted flat of the Lizard of Oz.

Lighting: (if possible) dimmable house lights; ability to make the entire theater dark; one spotlight; and colored flashing lights for the final scene.

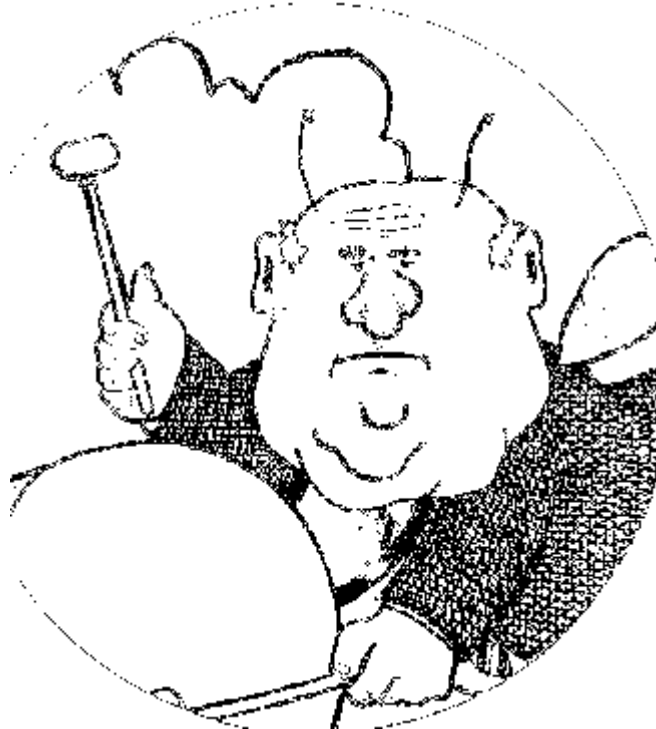
Tape Recordings: "Humdrum Humbug beating on hi humdrum..." repeated several times mechanically for first and last scenes. Also, Plato's long speech in scene 10 should be prerecorded. Carnival music. "Ome" repeated monotonously. Wild drummer's dance beat.

Special Effects: In scene 10, a show consisting of slides, a short film or a creative movement skit with kids dressed in black tights should roughly approximate the drift and emphasis of Plato's speech. This show/skit should be high interest, full of movement. (The Sharon production used a brief film of someone doing fingerpaintings -- painting house, grass, flowers, sun, then factory chimney, smoke, etc., obscuring the whole scene).

THE LIZARD OF OZ - 7

Characters:

NARRATOR, fish puppet
MR. SHERMIN, fish puppet
EUGENE, student
KEVIN, student
MARK, student
DONNY, student
LINDA, student
GAYNELL, student
KATHY, student
OTHER KIDS, as desired
MISS MORGAN, teacher
MISS PRYSBY, teacher
WITCH
POTBELLIED POTHEAD, has flowerpot instead of head
EMPTY-HEADED POTHEAD, has flowerpot instead of head, becomes PAUL NEWMAN
OTHER POTHEADS, as desired
SIR REAL, has bowl of cereal instead of head
HUMPTY DUMPTY, big cracked hardboiled egg
OTHER EGGHEADS, as desired
WALLFLOWER, flower puppet
MR. BACON, looks like big piece of bacon
MR. CHARON, the ferryboatman
LEWIS CARROLL
MR. SHERMIN, teacher
JOAN OF NOAH'S ARK
CAPTAIN AHAB
ASTRONAUT
CHAINED PERSON
PRAYING PERSON
PERSON IN PAIN



Scene 1

NARRATOR (in front of curtain): Once of twice, long ago, the fire of enchantment burnt low, and children and even grownups found nothing new in the world, nothing worth seeing or doing or bothering about; nothing, that is, except machines.

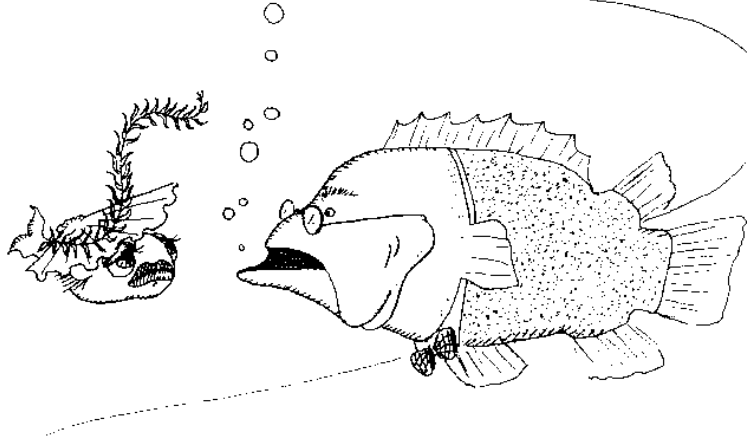
The disenchantment spread almost everywhere, until it reached the basement classroom in Sharon, Massachusetts, where a pair of fish, Mrs. O'Rourke and Mr. Shermin, lived in a fishbowl. It was there that the long adventure began.

(Curtain opens)

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SETTING: A classroom. In foreground a rectangular frame simulating an aquarium.

AT RISE: Two fish puppets behind the aquarium frame talk and observe class. In the background the class (EUGENE, KEVIN, MARK, DONNY, LINDA, GAYNELL, KATHY, & others as desired) settles down at their desks, very bored and slow-moving. The teachers (MISS MORGAN & MISS PRYSBY) try to prod them along.



MRS. O'ROURKE: Good morning, everybody! Good morning! (turns to MR. SHERMIN), Mr. Shermin, just look at them! They're so blank and bored. It's scary.

MR. SHERMIN: It's the Humbug.

MRS. O'ROURKE: The Humbug?

MR. SHERMIN: Yes, the Humbug. He's been flying around beating on his humdrum and disenchanting everybody. I was afraid we'd start to hear him down here. It was just a matter of time.

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MRS. O'ROURKE: But how do you know?

MR. SHERMIN: Of course I know. You know I know almost everything. I used to be a teacher before I decided to be a fish. And then I knew how to make myself a fish, which not many people, even teachers, know how to do. Yes, Mrs. O'Rourke, I assure you that it's the Humbug who caused all this.

MRS. O'ROURKE: But where can we go? What can we do?

MR. SHERMIN: Calm down now, Mrs. O'Rourke. Calm down... The only way to break the disenchantment is to make the Humbug change his tune. But the only person in the whole universe who can make him do that is the Lizard of Oz.

MRS. O'ROURKE: The Lizard:

MR. SHERMIN: You've probably heard of the Wizard of Oz.. Well that story was written by the Humbug. He wants everybody to believe that enchantment is just make-believe. He doesn't want anyone to know about the Lizard. So he named his story the "Wizard of Oz" hoping people would confuse it with the Lizard. And he made it a very good story so everybody would remember it and forget the Lizard. And that's just what happened.

(Unnoticed by the fish, EUGENE comes close to the fishbowl, listens).

MRS. O'ROURKE: But who is the Lizard of Oz:

MR. SHERMIN: He lives in the green green grass of Ome.

MRS. O'ROURKE: Ome?

MR. SHERMIN: Yes, Ome is the nicest part of Oz, with lakes and trees and lots of green grass for kids to roll in.

MRS. O'ROURKE: Can we get there on the MBTA?

MR. SHERMIN: The best way to get there is in a little green VW.

EUGENE: Can I help?

MR. SHERMIN (startled to see EUGENE standing so close): Maybe you can. I hope you can. (to MRS. O'ROURKE) Those kids have been down here in the basement at school, so they haven't heard much of the Humbug, and they're nowhere near as disenchanted as everybody else; though it's sad to say that some of them are pretty far gone.

(In the background, sounds of the Humbug, getting louder, closer -- "Humdrum Humbug, beating on his humdrum..." monotonously repeated)).

MR. SHERMIN: Quick, Eugene. Put cotton in your ears and get everybody to put cotton in theirs. Maybe it's not too late. Maybe you're all just enchanted enough to get to Oz and roll through the green green grass of Ome and find the Lizard and get him to change the Humbug's tune.

EUGENE (goes to closet and gets cotton): Hey, everybody! Here! Put this cotton in your ears so you can't hear the humdrum of the Humbug.

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KIDS: Sit on it, Eugene.

EUGENE: Look, I'm serious. Mr. Shermin said it's important. We have to get to Oz and roll in the green grass of Ome and find the Lizard and get him to change the Humbug's tune.

KIDS (typical comments of various kids; improvise):

(1) Well, if Mr. Shermin said it's important.

(2) OK, Eugene.

(3) Give some to me, Eugene.

(4) Don't forget me.

MISS MORGAN: Oh, it's such a beautiful spring day. I had wanted to take you on a field trip, but I couldn't think of any place to go. Now, with this cotton in my ears, I think it's a great idea to go to Ome and find the Lizard. What a great trip.

KEVIN: I don't want to go. That's kid's stuff.

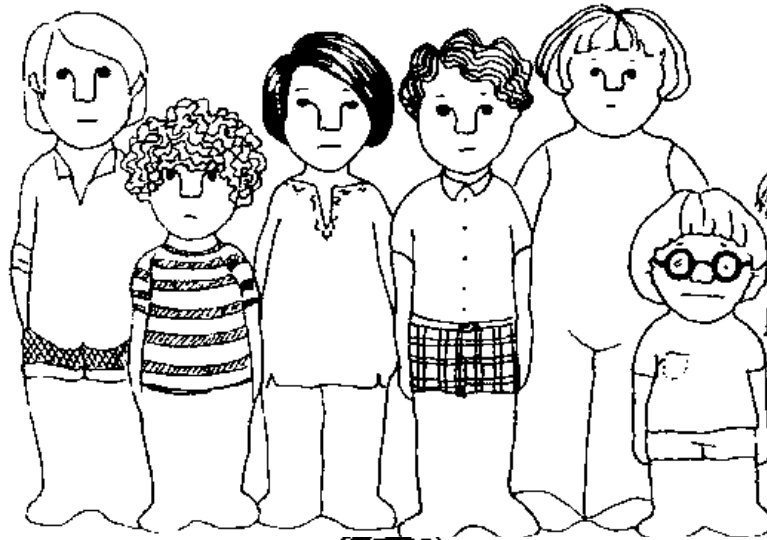
MISS PRYSBY: The fresh air will do you good.

(Curtain closes as everyone moves in front of stage).

Scene 2

SETTING: VW in front of stage (It could have been there from the beginning and can stay there till the end).

EUGENE: Miss Morgan, you're the only one we know who has a little green VW. And that's what Mr. Shermin said we should use to get to Oz and Ome.



MISS MORGAN: With this cotton in my ears, that sounds like a great idea. Come on, everybody, pile in.

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(They all go to the VW and pile in. KATHY carries fishbowl, with fish puppets).

KATHY: I've got the fishbowl, Miss Morgan. We can't leave Mr. Shermin and Mrs. O'Rourke behind.

KIDS (typical comments of various kids; improvise):

- (1) This is going to be fun.
- (2) Boy, there's a lot of people in this car.
- (3) Gosh, I can hardly move.
- (4) I think my knees are going to touch the ceiling.
- (5) I have to go to the bathroom.

MISS MORGAN: I'm stepping on the gas. (Everyone starts bouncing, exaggerated). Which way is Oz?

DONNY: Just follow the yellow brick road.

EVERYBODY (laughs)

KEVIN: There is no yellow brick road, silly.

EUGENE: Maybe Mr. Shermin knows.

MR. SHERMIN: Of course I know. I'll just flip my magic coin. Head means turn right. Tails mean left. And if it stands on end, that means straight ahead.

KIDS (typical comments) (still bouncing):

- (1) We're getting far from school.
- (2) Let's count telephone poles.
- (3) I want to go home. (whining)

MR. SHERMIN: Turn left, Miss Morgan. ...Turn right, Miss Morgan. ...Go straight ahead, Miss Morgan.

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KIDS (typical reactions): (1) Let's sing. (Everybody starts singing "The ants are marching one by one...")

MISS MORGAN: Watch out, everybody. I'm stepping on the brakes. (Singing stops: all lurch forward; bouncing stops).

KEVIN: Look at that! There's a huge pothole stretching all the way across the road. It's big enough for three VWs.

DONNY (jumps out and looks down): Gosh, this hole doesn't have a bottom.

MISS MORGAN: If Donny can't see any bottom, there just isn't one. Well, it looks like the road to Oz is closed. Maybe we should go to the Children's Museum instead.

MR. SHERMIN: No, Miss Morgan. We're right on course. Straight ahead. Drive straight ahead. The magic coin just stood on end, and the magic coin is never wrong.

(Everyone looks dismayed).

KIDS (typical comments):

(1) I've been to the Children's Museum before, and it's a really nice place.

(2) I want to go home. (whining)

MISS PRYSBY: I don't think driving into bottomless potholes could be very educational. We all know perfectly well it would be awful.

MISS MORGAN: Miss Prysby's right. I'm turning around.
(She turns the steering wheel. GAYNELL falls into

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MISS MORGAN's lap. Everyone lurches like the car is falling forward).

MISS MORGAN: The car is going forward! Right into the pothole! Hold on tight everyone!

(Everyone screams as the lights go out. Complete dark.)

KIDS (typical comments):

- (1) I'm on the bottom of the pile.
- (2) Hey, watch what you're doing with your foot.
- (3) I can't see a thing.
- (4) I still have to go to the bathroom.
- (5) I want to go home. (whining)

DONNY: The whole car rolled over.

MISS PRYSBY: No, Donny. You see we're falling very fast, and it just seems that we're upside down.

MISS MORGAN (very annoyed): Which way should we go now, Mr. Shermin?

MR. SHERMIN: Ask the next witch you see.

MISS MORGAN: Witch?

MR. SHERMIN: Down here, where there aren't any streets to turn left or right or straight ahead on, my magic coin isn't much good. But any witch can shoe us the witch way to Oz.

KIDS (typical comments):

- (1) I can't see anything but black.
- (2) I'm going to look anyways.



(3) I want to get out of here.

(4) Get your foot off me!

DONNY: I see her. Over there!

(Spotlight reveals WITCH, sitting on a bucket,
driving a broomstick).

WITCH: So you want to go to Oz?

MISS MORGAN: How did you know?

WITCH: What else would you be doing, flying down a
pothole in a little green VW stuffed with 16 people?

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MARK: Why are you sitting on a bucket? It looks awfully uncomfortable.

WITCH: All the latest modes come equipped with bucket seats. You don't have much choice. (Then she leans back and says, rather formally) You'll get ahead, if you get a head; so go straight ahead, and get an empty head that's gone to pot; then go behind, and you will find the spot you have in mind.

MISS MORGAN: What do you... (Spotlight goes off). She's gone. What could she have meant:

MR. SHERMIN: Hurry up! Do like she said. Drive straight ahead, or we'll miss the intersection.

MISS MORGAN: I'm hitting the gas.

LINDA (screams): The water has spilled out of the fishbowl!

KATHY (screams): Ewh! Mr. Shermin and Mrs. O'Rourke are squirming all over my belly.

(Lights go on).

Scene 3

(Lights reveal 3 or 4 POTHEADS -- people with flowerpots instead of heads).

MARK: Look at all the crazy people. They don't have heads. They have pots instead. We fell down a pothole. Maybe this is potheadland.

(POTBELLIED POTHEAD falls in front of VW).



MISS MORGAN: I'm hitting the brakes! (Everybody lurches forward).

GAYNELL: What happened? What happened?

MARK: I guess he tripped. And it's no wonder. With a pot instead of a head, he can't see where he's going.

DONNY: Gosh, he's covered with mud.

POTBELLIED POTHEAD: We're down to earth people. Earthenware is our natural dress. That and wonderwhere.

EVERYBODY: Wonderwhere?

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POTBELLIED POTHEAD: Yes, I wonder where my head's at.

EUGENE: Look, Miss Prysby. There's a water fountain. Maybe we can get water for the fishbowl.

MISS PRYSBY (reading sign): Potable water. Potable. That's a good word for you to learn today. It means it's clean enough to drink and clean enough for Mr. Shermin and Mrs. O'Rourke.

(KATHY gets out of the VW).

POTBELLIED POTHEAD: Not so fast. That's a potable water fountain.

KATHY: Yes, I know.

(She goes and tries to fill the bowl. Water splashes all over her).

POTBELLIED POTHEAD: I told you so. That's a potable water fountain. It'll only pour water into pots.

MISS MORGAN: But what can we do?

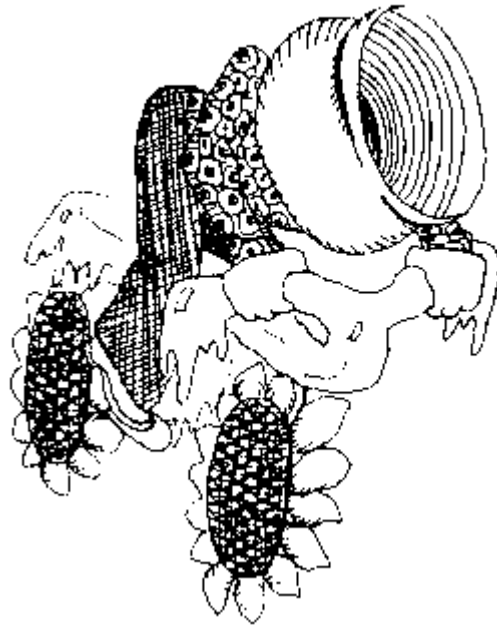
POTBELLIED POTHEAD: You'll just have to find somebody empty-headed enough to help you.

MISS MORGAN: But...

EUGENE: There's one! (pointing)

(EMPTYHEADED POTHEAD enters riding bicycle from the back of the theater down the center aisle. The bicycle is covered with aluminum foil

and tinsel simulating icicles and the wheels are decorated like big sunflowers.)



KEVIN: He's riding an icicle bicycle.

MARK: And the wheels are sunflowers.

EUGENE: Why doesn't the icicle melt?

EMPTYHEADED POTHEAD: It's cool, man, cool.

KATHY: How do you get it to go so fast?

EMPTYHEADED POTHEAD: That's flower-power, man,
real flower-power.

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MISS MORGAN: Pardon me, sir. I noticed that your head is empty and ...

EMPTYHEADED POTHEAD: Yes, it is empty. And don't go making fun of it either. Some of these guys'll put anything in their head just to have something there. But I've been waiting till I find something worth putting in.

MISS MORGAN: Well, if it wouldn't inconvenience you, we'd greatly appreciate it if you'd help us fill our fishbowl.

EMPTYHEADED POTHEAD: You mean to say fish are drowning cause they don't have any water to breath? why didn't you say so?

(Kids help as EMPTYHEADED POTHEAD pretends to full his empty head with water and transfer the water to the fishbowl).

LINDA (reciting): You'll get ahead if you get a head; so go straight ahead and get an empty head that's gone to pot; then go behind, and you will find the spot you have in mind.

KIDS (typical comments):

- (1) Hey, that's what the witch said.
- (2) Gosh, how'd you remember all that?

MR. SHERMIN: That's the one.

EMPTYHEADED POTHEAD: The what?

MR. SHERMIN: The empty head that's gone to pot. You're the one the witch told us to find and take back.

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EMPTYHEADED POTHEAD: Witch? You mean one of those old ladies that ride around on broomsticks? You've got to be kidding, man. You've got to be kidding. That's just too far out.

MISS MORGAN: Well, come on. Let's go. Maybe the witch did know what she was talking about.

(Kids and teachers all get back into the VW.
EMPTYHEADED POTHEAD gets in too).

MISS MORGAN: I'm stepping on the gas.

(Everyone lurches backward. Exaggerated
bouncing. Lights go out again. Screams.)

Scene 4

(Dark)

EMPTYHEADED POTHEAD: Man, this is some trip.

DONNY: Hey, look! (Spotlight reveals WITCH). It's the Witch again!

WITCH (running across in front of curtain, spotlight stays on her as she goes): For a real meal, see Sir Real; then egghead south to the mouth of the Nile, and find the tooth, the whole tooth, and nothing but the tooth, for smiles and smiles till suffertime (Spotlight goes off, leaving the theater in darkness again).

MISS MORGAN: Now what's she talking about? She just comes and goes before you have a chance to ask her

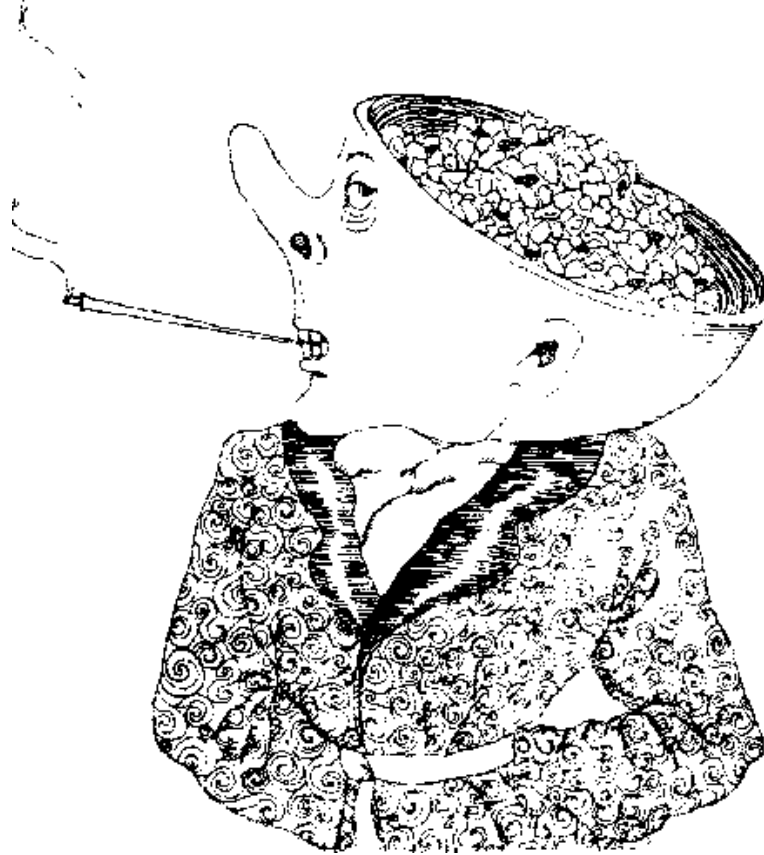
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anything. Well, I'm stepping on the gas again. Hold tight everybody. Oops! I'm hitting the brakes! (Lights go on.)

Scene 5

(Lights reveal SIR REAL standing in front of the VW. Everyone lurches forward as if MISS MORGAN had just hit the brakes).

MISS MORGAN: What's that standing in the middle of the road?



DONNY: Gosh, that must be the cereal, like the Witch said. He's got a bowl of raisin bran instead of a head.

SIR REAL: The name is Sir Real. And that's raisin "brain:.

MISS MORGAN: Certainly, sir , certainly. Donny didn't meant o insult you. He just sees things the way they are; I mean, the way he's used to seeing them. And he's got a lot to learn. Yes, all of us have a lot to learn. But could you please tell us where we could find a restaurant? You see, we're going to Oz, and it's a rather long trip, and we're all very hungry.

SIR REAL: Well, you can get plenty of food for thought in the Library, just on the other side of the block.

DONNY: What block? I don't see any block?

SIR REAL: Naturally. It's a mental block. Just do as I say, and we'll be there in a minute. (He climbs on the back of the VW).

MISS MORGAN: I'm hitting the gas.

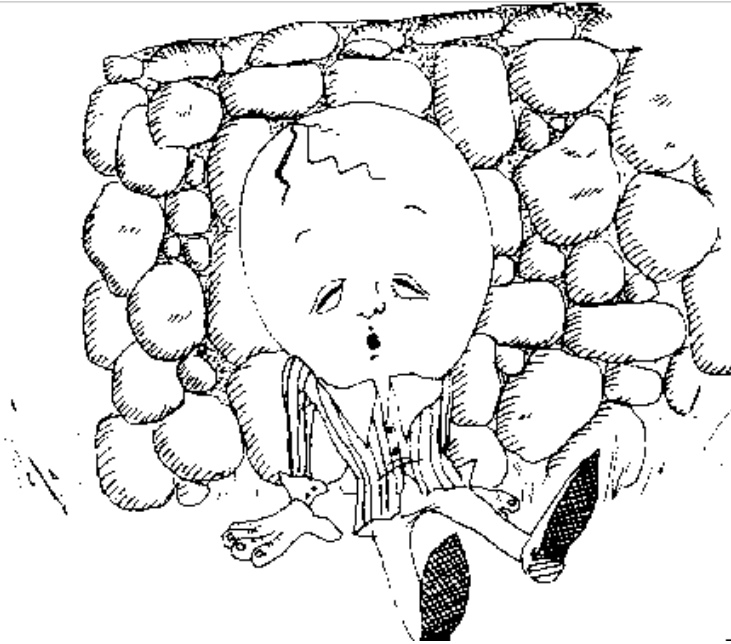
(Everyone lurches back, then starts bouncing).

Scene 6

DONNY: Gosh, we must be getting near the restaurant. I see food walking all over the place.

SIR REAL: That's not food, you man. Those are eggheads.

(Enter eggs of various varieties -- sunnyside up, scrambled hard boiled, etc. Off to the side, at the base of a wall, appears HUMPTY DUMPTY, a hardboiled egg with a big crack. At the top of the wall, appears the puppet WALLFLOWER).



EUGENE (pointing at HUMPTY): That must be the saddest egghead in the world.

SIR REAL: Indeed he is. That's Humpty Dumpty. He's in the dumps right now. Really depressed. You see, he's in love with a wallflower. That light blue one right up there on top of the wall. He and she had been sitting up there for years, never paying attention to one another. Then one day, they got to talking; and Humpty fell for her, fell all the way to the ground. And when he saw that he couldn't climb back up, he was all broken up about it. And here he's sat ever since.

GAYNELL (climbs up the wall and reaches out to pick the WALLFLOWER): Can I take it home?

MISS PRYSBY: No, Gaynell. This is a very special flower. She has thoughts and feelings just like you and me. And it wouldn't be right to hurt her.

WALLFLOWER: You're so nice to protect me. But what's the use? I was just a quiet little flower before I met Humpty. All I wanted was just for nobody to pick me or step on me. And since I was on tip of a wall, not many people walked near me; and since I was so homely, not many people would want to pick me. Every day was just the same as another. But at least I was safe. And then I got to know Humpty, and everything was different, and I came to life. More than anything in the world, I wanted him to pick me, even if it would be the death of me. But just as he started to reach for me, he tottered and fell, and I've been so alone and miserable that I just can't go on. And I'd be glad if anybody, just anybody would pick me and end it all.

(Everyone sad. They look at one another, not knowing what to do. The LINDA has an idea and whispers it to the EMPTYHEADED POTHEAD).

EMPTYHEADED POTHEAD: Yeah, man, cool. What's a head for but to make a flowerchild happy.

(Kids fill the pot with dirt and dig the flower up, plant her in the EMPTYHEADED POTHEAD'S empty pot. KATHY pours in water from the fishbowl. EMPTYHEADED POTHEAD starts staggering. HUMPTY DUMPTY gets up to help him).

EMPTYHEADED POTHEAD: Heavy, man, heavy. Where's my head at?

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(He suddenly yanks the flowerpot right off. Most of the kids scream and hide their eyes.)

DONNY (who kept watching): Gosh, he's got another head. Can you do that again, mister?

(Everybody looks now).

MISS PRYSBY: What beautiful blue eyes he has.

EMPTYHEADED POTHEAD: Man, I feel like a new man.

(He hands the pot with the WALLFLOWER to HUMPTY DUMPTY).

MISS MORGAN: Well, that's what we'll call you then -- Mr. New Man.

MISS PRYSBY: He looks just like Paul Newman.

EVERYONE: That's what we'll call him -- Paul Newman.

NEWMAN: Well, whatever you call me, man, I'm hungry.

SIR REAL: No problem at all. Right this way, folks. Here's the restaurant.

Scene 7

(Curtain opens revealing a Library, MR. BACON behind the desk.)

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GAYNELL: I don't remember seeing that door before.

KIDS (typical comments):

(1) I'm starving.

(2) Let's go.

(3) Yeah.

(4) Do you think they have a bathroom here?

DONNY: Gosh, this isn't a restaurant. There's nothing but books.

(Everybody goes onto the stage, starts looking around).

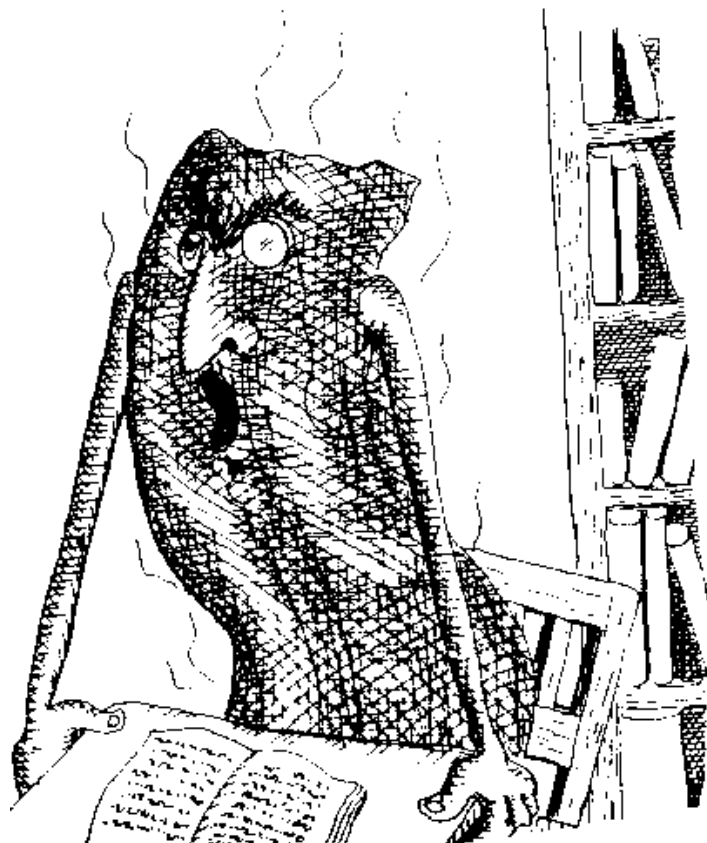
KATHY (going over to the desk): Miss Prysby, do you have any salt and pepper? I just found the biggest, most perfectly delicious looking piece of bacon in the world.

MR. BACON: Cannibals! Barbarians! Whoever let this horde of ruffians into a library?

SIR REAL: This is Mr. Bacon, Mr. Francis Bacon, the librarian.

MISS PRYSBY: Excuse us, Mr. Bacon. We didn't mean any harm. We're just a class on a field trip to Oz, a very educational trip; and we're all very hungry. And when we asked the way to a restaurant, this gentleman directed us here. Apparently, there's been some mistake.

MR. BACON: No mistake, no mistake at all. The Library is the best place to get food for thought. Help yourself. We have a wide selection. Some books are to be tasted, others swallowed, and some few chewed and digested.



EUGENE (grabs a book, rips out a page and starts chewing it): This doesn't taste much like food.

MR. BACON: Barbarians! Absolute barbarians! Didn't anyone ever teach you how to eat a book? (He picks up a book). "Once upon a space there was a time, a cute little time; her name was Now." That's how to eat a book.

MISS PRYSBY: But that's just reading. That could never satisfy these hungry children.

MR. BACON: And why not: I myself find it very satisfying.

NEWMAN: Miss Prysby, I couldn't see when I was a pothead, so I never learned to read. Could you teach me how?

(Kids pick up books and wander off in ones and twos, quickly get involved in reading. MISS PRYSBY starts teaching NEWMAN. MR. BACON, SIR REAL, & MISS MORGAN talk together).

MR. BACON: Have you eaten today's news?

SIR REAL: yes, and I'm fed up with it. Things just keep getting wars and wars and more wars.

MISS MORGAN: It's hard to say just what it'll lead to. Only time will tell.

MR. BACON: Now where did you get that silly notion? You should tell time; not wait for it to tell you. What do you go to school for but to learn to tell time? (MISS MORGAN puzzled. Then she looks at her watch).

MISS MORGAN: Come along now, children! Children! We have to go! It's nearly three o'clock, and I'm sure your parents are all wondering what became of you. Thank you very much, Mr. Bacon and Sir Real. It was so nice of you to show us around. And we all had such a good time that I'm sure we'll be coming back again soon.

EUGENE: Going? But, Miss Morgan, Mr. Shermin said this is very important. We have to get to Ome to save the world.

MISS MORGAN: Let's go. All of you. Into the car this instant.

(Curtain closes as soon as everybody, except MISS PRYSBY, NEWMAN, MR. BACON, & SIR REAL are off the stage and at the VW).

Scene 8

KIDS (a lot of grumbling; typical comments):

- (1) I was just getting into it.
- (2) That was fun. why did we have to stop?
- (3) Why do we have to leave so soon?

MISS MORGAN: Hold on tight. I'm hitting the gas.

(Everybody lurches backward, then starts bouncing).

MARK: But, Miss Morgan, we forgot Miss Prysby and Paul Newman.

MISS MORGAN: There's no time to turn around. I have to get you kids home. I'll worry about them later.

(Lights slowly dim).

KIDS (typical comments):

- (1) I wonder where we're going?
- (2) This doesn't look like Sharon to me.

- (3) I've got to go to the bathroom.
- (4) The road is getting narrow and bumpy.
- (5) It's getting dark.
- (6) Where are we, Miss Morgan?

MISS MORGAN: I'm hitting the brakes. (Everyone lurches forward. Bouncing stops). the road seems to end here. There are just two paths, just wide enough for a little car. I wonder which way we should go?

EUGENE: Mr. Shermin isn't saying anything. I don't think even he knows where we are.

(LINDA & KATHY get out of the VW and wander down to the left, closer to the audience).

LINDA: There's a clearing down here, Miss Morgan.

KATHY: And there's a full moon and loads of flowers. It's just beautiful.

(More kids get out of the VW and start to play and pick up flowers off the ground).

MISS MORGAN (still driving): I'm just too tired to chase everybody.

(She bounces slightly to indicate the car is moving).

KEVIN (going back toward the curtain): I wonder what's over there?

MARK: I think I see a river.

THE LIZARD OF OZ - 34

KATHY: Oh! Mrs. O'Rourke just jumped out of the fishbowl into the river. She's swimming away, and she looks like she's having a great time.

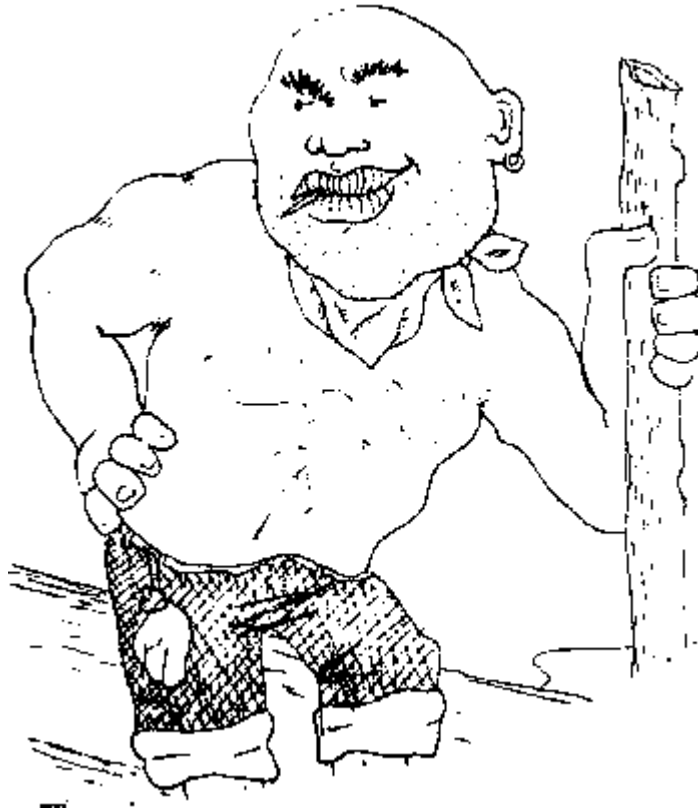
(Kids all watch. Miss Morgan gets up to join them).

LINDA: Mr. Shermin hasn't said much lately.

KATHY: Yeah, he looks pretty sick.

EUGENE: Look! A man on a raft coming down the river.

(Enter MR. CHARON, leaning on a pole for pushing rafts).



KEVIN: Are you Huckleberry Finn?

MR. CHARON: No, Charon's the name, Mr. Charon, the ferryboatman. Where do you want to go?

MISS MORGAN: We want to go home.

EUGENE: But, Miss Morgan, we have to get to Ome. Mr. Shermin said so. He's too sick to say anything himself now. But we have to get there and save the world.

CHARON: Home or Ome, I wouldn't want to go either place myself; but everyone to his own taste; and either way, it's quite an undertaking; so I guess you'll need me to take you under.

MISS MORGAN: Under where:

MR. CHARON: Under the world, of course. I'm the under-taker; Mr. Charon's the name.

MISS MORGAN: But why should we go under the world just to get home:

MR. CHARON: Do you know where you are or how you got her or where to go next?

MISS MORGAN: No. That's why I asked you.

MR. CHARON: Yes, yes, the same old story. But if I understand, it doesn't do you any good. You've got to understand yourself; so I've got to take you down under the world; so you can stand under it and understand it. That's

my job. Let's get on with it. But first you'll have to pay the toll.

MISS MORGAN: Toll?

MR. CHARON: Yes, of course. Do you think I work for nothing? One magic coin please.

EUGENE (takes coin from Mr. Shermin): Here's Mr. Shermin's magic coin. We won't need this anymore.

MR. CHARON (taking the coin): Come on aboard. Easy now. Drive that thing slowly. Don't tip my raft. (pantomime driving the VW onto the raft). That's it. Steady, steady...right on. All right, everybody, here we go.

(KATHY, GAYNELL, & LINDA whisper and giggle. Kids pantomime watching the shore, motion of raft going down river).

Scene 9

(Pantomime jolt of raft hitting shore. Lights brighten to normal).

MR. CHARON: All ashore. Here we are in the underworld.

(Kids pile out of VW. Enter LEWIS CARROLL in underwear).

KATHY: Mister, why are you walking around in your underwear? (Girls giggle).

CARROLL: Of course I'm in underwear. What else would you wear in the underworld?

KATHY: That just doesn't seem right.

CARROLL: But of course it's right. Everybody here writes. Perhaps you've heard of me. I'm Lewis Carroll.

LINDA: Yes, I remember. You wrote Alice in Wonderland.

CARROLL: That's right. And the gentleman over there is William Shakespeare. And the one fishing on the riverbank is Mark Twain.

MISS MORGAN: Mr. Carroll, I'm sure all these people are very interesting, but we really don't have any time to stop and talk. Could you please tell us how to get home from here.

EUGENE: Could you tell us how to get Ome instead?

CARROLL: Well, I don't know how to get to either place myself, and I've heard some pretty bad things about both of them. But, if you like, I can take you down to the next underworld. Maybe somebody there can help you.

MISS MORGAN: The next underworld?

CARROLL: Of course. I stand under the world. But there are others much lower who stand under me. Yes, there are many levels of understanding.

MISS MORGAN: What?

THE LIZARD OF OZ - 38

CARROLL: We have to go down again. It's all quite simple, really. Come on, everyone. Back on the ferry. I've got a pocketful of magic coins.

(Kids all pile back onto raft and into VW.
Pantomime pushing off from shore, motion on raft going down river).

CARROLL: I can't see why anyone, much less a bunch of kids, would want to go to Ome. I hear it's an awful place. Why that's the land of the Great Dragon of Ome, the famous firebreathing Lizard of Oz, the Leaping Lizard himself.

EUGENE: Firebreathing dragon? Mr. Shermin never said anything about that. (Turns to fishbowl). Mr. Shermin, Mr. Shermin! Miss Morgan, Mr. Shermin looks awfully sick.

Scene 10

(Pantomime raft hitting shore. Kids get out of VW and off raft. MISS MORGAN drives VW off raft onto shore.)

MR. CARROLL (to CHARON): Could you direct us to the home of the muses?

MR. CHARON: Right over there, on Mount Parnassus.
(Pointing toward the stage).

(Exit MR. CHARON. Everybody else moves toward stage.)

MR. CARROLL: Okay, Miss Morgan, it's up to you to invoke the muses.

MISS MORGAN: but what should I say?

MR. CARROLL: Whatever you feel.

MISS MORGAN: Please, Muse, we're very lost and very confused; and we don't know how we'll ever find our way out of here if you don't help us.

PLATO (voice from behind curtain): Which muse do you want?

MISS MORGAN: A muse. Just a muse.

PLATO: Yes, the A-muse is my favorite too. Right this way.

(Curtain opens part way, revealing Plato. Kids go up on stage.)

MR. CARROLL: That's Mr. Plato. He's the speaker of the house. He helps the muses talk to strangers. He interprets their signs and strange words so people can understand them.

PLATO: Come in here and sit down.

(Kids sit on edge of stage and watch a show while Plato tells his story to Miss MORGAN. The show could be slides, a short film or a creative movement skit with kids dressed in black tights. The words of Plato's long speech should be tape recorded.)

MISS MORGAN: Please, sir, please tell us what you mean. We're lost, very lost, and it's been such a long time since these children were home. I'm sure their parents are worried sick.

PLATO (prerecorded): Once upon a time, there was a world and an unworld. People lived in the world and unpeople lived in the unworld. The world was very much like the unworld; and the people were very much like the unpeople. The sun spent half its time in each place; and everyone lived and grew and died and was happy.

The name of the world was Home. And the name of the Unworld was Ome.

In the middle of Home was a huge machine. It could wash your dishes and your clothes. It could cook your food or keep it cold. It could cook your food or keep it cold. It could do all sorts of things. And the people of Home were very happy with their machine. It saved them so much time. And it could be made to do many more things. So people worked on the machine and worked on it; and soon it could move you from one part of Home to another at great speeds; and it could even tell you how great it was and show you pictures of how much everybody loved it and depended on it; and that made it easier for people to work harder for the machine so it could give them all the things they'd ever dreamed of.

The only trouble was the atmosphere. The machine gave off fumes. You got used to it after a while; so you hardly noticed it except on what would have been bright sunshiny days. But the fumes were always there. It was a deadening atmosphere. Plants and animals started dying. But man

adapted. He learned to use machine air instead of plant air. And he came to depend more and more on the machine.

Back when the sun could be seen, plants and animals and men used to grow up toward the sunlight. Now, instead, they grew toward the machine light. And the machine built them houses, much warmer and more comfortable than caves; and there men sat night after night, watching the moving shadow that the machine's light cast on the walls. And they were pleased.

Meanwhile, without anyone noticing it, the sun left. It went just behind the clouds anymore. Now it stayed all the time in the unworld, named Ome. And strange things started happening in the unworld. The unanimals and unplants and unpeople who lived there weren't used to all that light. They started growing and growing, and soon there were all sorts of monsters. Little lizards grew to the size of dinosaurs and dragons, and strange beasts of all kinds filled the unworld.

The unpeople feared that if the sun kept shining that way, the monsters would soon get out of control and kill them. So the unpeople captured and tamed the biggest dragon they could find. And they taught him to jump until he could jump all the way up to the sun. And he did. And he swallowed the sun and came back down to the ground with the sun in his belly.

As the unpeople had hoped, the monsters couldn't stand the change in climate; the plants they needed to survive stopped growing. Soon the only monster left was the dragon with the sun in his belly that somehow the sun had made deathless.

The sunlight shone through the dragon's skin like a light through a shade; but still the light was so intense that many unpeople were blinded, all but those who put on sunglasses. Everyone was drawn to this light. As they got close they were awestruck and spellbound by the sight. They just chanted over and over -- "Ome, Ome, Ome," as an expression of their awe and perhaps of their joy at being in this place and seeing this sight.

I've heard that things are changing fast at Home, that a Humbug has been flying around beating on his humdrum and most everyone has been picking up the beat, getting into the rhythm of the machine. But the Humbug is hardly the cause of it all. He's just part of a long, long process. He's just speeding things up a little. And nothing will really change the direction of things, unless somebody brings back fire from Ome to Home.

MISS MORGAN: I really don't understand. I've never seen a machine like that at home. And I'm sure that if there is such a thing, it's very expensive and not many people can afford it. And the sun hasn't left. It shines in Sharon sometimes. I saw it just yesterday before we fell down that pothole.

PLATO: Are you sure that was the sun you saw and not something the machine made?

MISS MORGAN: I don't know what's real anymore. But I do know that I must get this class home.... Even if it would be nice to bring back fire to the world, we simply must get home.

PLATO: Well, the shadow show is over. Come with me to the top of the mountain. From there you should be able to see clearly which way to go.

Scene 11

(Curtain closes with everyone in front. Everyone, including PLATO & CARROLL, gets into the VW. Pantomime bumpy uphill ride. Sounds of an amusement park get louder, closer).

KIDS (typical comments):

- (1) We're getting so high.
- (2) It's so clear up here.
- (3) This is great fun, Miss Morgan. Better than the Children's Museum.
- (4) I bet you can see all the way to China from way up here.

MISS MORGAN: We're at the top. I'm stepping on the brakes.

(Everybody lurches forward, then gets out and runs around).

DONNY: Gosh, Miss MORGAN, take a look inside this cloud. It's all silvery in there.

PLATO: Yes, every cloud has a silver lining. But the best of them is the one with the big amusement park -- Cloud Number Nine -- right over there. (pointing) (Kids run off to Cloud Nine off stage, with much talk and excitement).

PLATO (to MISS MORGAN & MR. CARROLL): The path to the right leads to Ome. That to the left leads to Home.

THE LIZARD OF OZ - 44

(MISS MORGAN hesitates).

PLATO: Or, if you like, you can stay at the amusement park in Cloud Nine forever and ever. But here, take this package. If you do decide to go to Ome, you just might need it.

(Exit PLATO).

MISS MORGAN (looking first one way, then the other). Well, the children are already inside. I might as well join them. I can make up my mind later. She and MR. CARROLL go offstage following the kids).

Scene 12

(MISS MORGAN and MR. CARROLL come out from behind the curtain and sit at the edge of the stage. Amusement park music and sounds in the background).

MISS MORGAN: What fun. I'm feeling tired and wonderful.

MR. CARROLL: It's a great place with none of the cares of the world or the unworld. The cloud just floats here, there and everywhere; and it doesn't matter where it is, because things are always the same inside -- always wonderful, protected from sadness by the silver lining.

MISS MORGAN: Oh, let's look at the package Mr. Plato gave me. (Opening the package). A whole pile of sunglasses and, look, a big stick.

MR. CARROLL: That's a torch. It catches fire easily. It would come in handy if you ever went to Ome. But there's no reason to go to Ome or to go Home either. The kids are having the time of their lives right here. There's not point in trying to change the world. Most people are happy with it just as it is. Those that aren't can drop out, just like you did and like the potheads and the eggheads. There's no reason to worry about them. ... You look like you're in another world.

MISS MORGAN: Or unworld. I'm sorry.

MR. CARROLL: I guess we're both tired. I think I'll catch a few winks. (lies down to sleep).

MISS MORGAN (sits, looks down both paths; talks to herself, remembering): The path to Ome is on the right, and the path to Home is on the left... It's something I must do for the world. (Stands up, pushes aside the curtain, and calls in a loud whisper, so as not to wake MR. CARROLL) Children! Children! Come quickly!

KIDS (typical comments):

- (1) Do we have to go , Miss Morgan? We're having a blast.
- (2) You're always spoiling our fun.
- (3) Gosh, Miss Morgan, can't we stay?
- (4) I don't want to go home.

MISS MORGAN: It's time for us to go, and that's that. Quiet down now, everyone. We don't want to wake Mr. Carroll.

LINDA: Isn't he coming with us, Miss Morgan?

THE LIZARD OF OZ - 46

MISS MORGAN: No, Linda, he's decided to stay, but we have something to do. Here, everyone, put on these sunglasses, and let's go.

(Everybody piles into the VW. Pantomime start and bumpy ride. In background, exit MR. CARROLL, unobtrusively).

KIDS (typical comments):

- (1) Hey, neat! Green sunglasses, just like in the Wizard of Oz.
 - (2) Wonder what these are for?
 - (3) Hey, we're sure going down fast.
 - (4) Look! There's the Library. We're back at the Library.
 - (5) How did we get back here?
-

Scene 13

(Curtain opens showing Library with MISS PRYSBY, PAUL NEWMAN, SIR REAL, and MR. BACON. Everybody gets out of VW and goes up on stage to join them.)

KIDS (typical comments):

- (1) Hey, Miss Prysby, you missed the greatest time.
- (2) Yeah, we were in this neat park inside a cloud with a silver lining.
- (3) And we went down to the underworld on a raft, and even went under the underworld.
- (4) It's sure good to see you again.

MISS MORGAN: Here are sunglasses for both of you. (giving them to MISS PRYSBY and PAUL NEWMAN) You'll need them where we're going.

THE LIZARD OF OZ - 47

MISS PRYSBY (taking them, but puzzled): Then where are we going?

KATHY (interrupting): Miss Morgan, come quick! Mr. Shermin is swimming around very fast and the water around his head is boiling.

(Everybody crowds around the fishbowl, so the audience can't see it).

EUGENE: He's been sick. And for the longest time, he hasn't said anything.

MR. SHERMIN (faintly, but clearly audible): I don't know most everything. I've just been living in a fishbowl.

KEVIN: He really looks depressed. He's knocking his head against the wall.

MISS MORGAN: I'm afraid he'll crack up.

(Kids huddle closer to fishbowl. Sound of cracking glass, splashing water, feet landing on the ground. The kids scream and fall back. Out steps MR. SHERMIN, the teacher.)

KIDS (typical comments):

- (1) Oh, Mr. Shermin, it's really you.
- (2) You're a teacher again.
- (3) It's great to have you back.

MR. SHERMIN: Well, I'm not going back with you to Sharon. No, not right away, at least. I want to find my way back to the Underworld and maybe talk to Mr. Plato.

There's lots to understand. It made me sick to think of all I didn't understand. And after I thought I knew everything... It's hard to say for sure, but you may be seeing me again soon. It all depends. But for now, I'll need a backpack...yes, and some books so I'll have lots to eat on my way. Mr. Bacon, can you help?

MR. BACON: Yes, certainly, sir. Right here -- a backpack, and, yes, books. Here's one by Plato about caves and shadows and things, and one by Lewis Carroll, and a journal for you to write your own book. Good luck, sir.

EVERYONE: Goodbye, Mr. Shermin. Hope we'll see you soon.

(Exit MR. SHERMIN).

KIDS (typical comments):

- (1) What a time to leave us.
- (2) Just when we need him most.
- (3) He's deserting us, that's what.

MISS PRYSBY: We sure will miss him.

MISS MORGAN: Well, we can't let that stop us. Everybody gather round the VW, and I'll tell you what we're going to do.

(All except SIR REAL and MR. BACON gather round the VW).

MISS MORGAN (gets set to speak, then stops, scared, then starts again): Well, here we are -- the knights of the little green VW. And together we're supposed to change the world? We've got a stick and some sunglasses, and that's it.

Mr. Bacon, could you come and help us? It seems that the Lizard of Oz is a great fire-breathing dragon, and we don't have any experience fighting fire-breathing dragons.

MR. BACON: Sorry, Miss, sorry, but I can't leave my library. There's no telling what would happen if I were to leave. Barbarians are everywhere. They'd destroy these books, and the world would starve. No. I can't go with you.

MISS MORGAN: Then, Sir Real. Please. We have to bring back fire to the world. Can you help us?

SIR REAL: I don't think I should be going on any dangerous expeditions. You see, I don't have a son; and if anything should happen to me, now one would be real anymore. It's my duty to stay behind and protect myself. But maybe you can find some help along the way. After all, it's a long way to the Nile.

MISS MORGAN: The Nile?

LINDA: Oh, yes, that's what the witch said, remember? "Egghead south to the mouth of the Nile, and find the tooth, the whole tooth, and nothing but the tooth for smiles and smiles till suffertime."

MISS MORGAN: Well, which way is the Nile?

SIR REAL (pointing): That way, of course.

MISS MORGAN: Come on everyone. Pile in. We're getting no help here. We'll just have to save the world by ourselves.

THE LIZARD OF OZ - 50

(Everyone -- including NEWMAN & MISS PRYSBY, but not including SIR REAL & MR. BACON -- piles into the VW).

MISS MORGAN: Everybody in? I'm stepping on the gas.

(Pantomime start, bouncing movement of car. Curtain shuts with SIR REAL & MR. BACON behind it).

Scene 14

MISS PRYSBY: I certainly hope you know where you're going, Miss Morgan. I must admit that I'm confused.

KIDS (typical comments):

- (1) This certainly is an unusual field trip.
- (2) We'd better stop to eat.
- (3) I have to go to the bathroom. (4) I'm starving.
- (5) Me too.
- (6) Me too.
- (7) I want to go home.
- (8) I want to eat.

(Slices of bread thrown at the VW from offstage).

NEWMAN: Man alive!

DONNY: Gosh! It's raining bread.

MISS PRYSBY (catching some): Like manna from heaven. Miss Morgan, stop the car! (Everybody lurches forward). Everybody out! Grab some bread, get back in, and I'll tell you the story about manna.

THE LIZARD OF OZ - 51

(Everybody gathers up slices of bread, climbs back into the car, starts eating.)

MISS MORGAN: I'm stepping on the gas.
(Pantomime car start and bouncy ride).

EVERYBODY: Tell us about manna, Miss Prysby.

MISS PRYSBY: You see, long ago there was a man named Moses, who led the children of Israel out of Egypt.

MARK: How many kids did Israel have?

MISS PRYSBY: Oh, many, many.

GAYNELL: As many as our class?

MISS PRYSBY: Oh, more, many more than that.

DONNY: Gosh.

MISS PRYSBY: And while they were in the wilderness, a bread-like substance they called "manna" rained on them, and that was what kept them alive through their long journey.

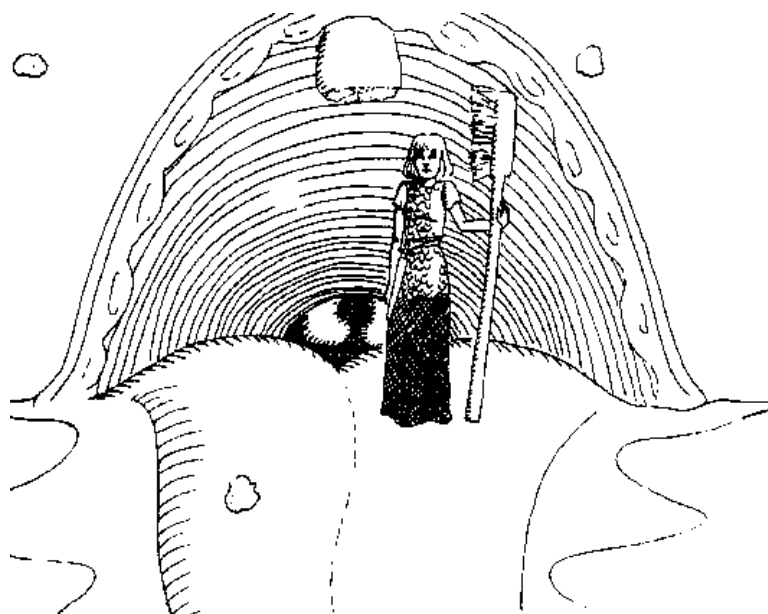
KEVIN: That's a good story, Miss Prysby.

MISS PRYSBY: I thought you'd enjoy it. History is full of good stories. We should all read the stories from history. When we get back to school...

DONNY (interrupting): Gosh, what a big mouth.

MISS PRYSBY (shocked that DONNY would say that to her): Donny!

(Curtain opens just far enough to show the big open mouth of a whale with one huge tooth. JOAN OF NOAH'S ARK is standing inside the whale's mouth. She wears medieval armor, with a shield in one hand and a huge toothbrush in the other hand).



MISS PRYSBY (suddenly sees the mouth): Oh!...That must be the mouth of the Nile.

DONNY: It's a whale's mouth, and there's someone inside.

MISS PRYSBY: Oh, that must be Jonah.

JOAN: No, my name is Joan, and this is the Ark. Haven't you ever heard of Joan of Noah's Ark?

KATHY: Oh, yes, that was when the big flood came, and two of every kind of animal went for a boat ride with Noah.

EUGENE: And when the flood went down, they went ashore and started the world all over again.

JOAN: If you'll just step aside, I'll let down the gangplank and let the gang out. It's supper time, and they're all very hungry.

(Pantomime that animals are coming out of the Ark, or children dressed as animals could come out of the Ark and pick up slices of bread).

KIDS (typical comments):

- (1) Look at the tigers.
- (2) The lions.
- (3) Ewh! Snakes and creepy crawly things.
- (4) Owls.
- (5) What a neat pair of mice.

(Kids pretend to pet animals, coax them to come close, play with them.)

JOAN: The whale comes here every time he and his friends get hungry. And they get hungry often, so often that some people call him the "Mouth of the Nile".

LINDA: "Egghead south to the mouth of the Nile; and find the tooth, the whole tooth, and nothing but the tooth, for smiles and smiles till suffertime.

MARK: I bet this is what the witch was talking about.

MISS MORGAN: Then we must be right on course.

THE LIZARD OF OZ - 54

KEVIN: What's suffertime?

MISS PRYSBY: I'm sure that's just a mistake. The witch must have meant "suppertime". And she said "tooth" when she must have meant "truth".

JOAN (Brushing the whale's big tooth with her big toothbrush): Well, supper's over. And you have to brush up on the tooth every once in awhile. Otherwise, it'll decay. And there's nothing worse than having to go around with a false tooth.

MISS PRYSBY: How did you get here?

JOAN: Well, I meant to go to Ome, but when I stopped off here on the way, it was such a terrible shambles -- all these animals rambling about, and no one to clean up after them. And the whale's tooth hadn't been brushed since Noah left. So I decided to stay here. I know my place. There's work to be done. And if it weren't for the Captain, this wouldn't be such a bad place. But...Well, speak of the devil, the very devil himself -- here comes the ancient mariner, old Captain Ahab. There are those who like his talk, who think it's good for the soul. But I'm not one of those.

(Enter CAPTAIN AHAB from whale's mouth. Exit JOAN.)

DONNY: Gosh, he's got a false leg. Did he forget to brush it or something?

AHAB (scowls as everyone stares at him): All right, ye landlubbers. Enough of fun and games. It's suffertime.

KIDS (typical comments):

- (1) Look, all the animals are running back into the whale's mouth.
- (2) What's suffertime?
- (3) I don't know, and I don't want to find out.
- (4) I want to go home.

MISS PRYSBY: What's the meaning of this?

AHAB: It means it's time to suffer, missy. All my life I was weeping and whaling and weeping and whaling. Then a voice cried out to me -- "suffer the little children", and I discovered the joys of suffering and making children suffer. It's good for the soul, I tell ye. Now all aboard. Children first. I'm here to usher ye into the very jaws of hell. A;; aboard, I tell ye.

KIDS (scream and cower behind teachers)

MISS MORGAN: I'm sorry, sir. Apparently, there's been some mistake. We're on our way to Ome. I'm afraid we'll have to miss this boat ride.

AHAB: If ye be feared of yonder whale, as well ye might; than ye should be a thousand times more feared of the fires of Ome. They'll burn your very soul.

MISS MORGAN: Everyone in the car!

(All, except CAPTAIN AHAB & JOAN, clamber into the car).

AHAB: Run if ye like, if ye think ye can. But ye'll never escape the darkness within ye. The wise stay and pay penance.

EUGENE: I've got a few pennies.

MISS MORGAN: Hold on tight. I'm hitting the gas.
(Everyone lurches now one way, now the other).

MISS PRYSBY: What are you doing? What's the matter?

MISS MORGAN: We're driving right into the whale's mouth, and I can't stop!

(Lights go out; screams; in the dark the curtain closes).

Scene 15

KIDS (typical comments):

- (1) This is scary, Miss Morgan.
- (2) It's so dark in here.
- (3) I want to go home.
- (4) Is there a bathroom in here? I have to go to the bathroom.
- (5) I'm scared.
- (6) I've never been this scared before, not even in the fun house.
- (7) The fund house? You thought that was scary? That was nothing. I saw this Dracula movie once...
- (8) Maybe if we sing, we won't be so scared. (9) Good idea.

(Everyone starts singing "The worms crawl in, the worms crawl out...")

NEWMAN: Music, mighty strong medicine.

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KEVIN: Hey, the whale's belly is moving. It's twisting and turning. Hang on, everybody. I think he's going to throw up.

(Screams)

Scene 16

(Lights go on; everyone spread out in front of the stage on their hands and knees and backs. The VW is where it has always been.)

NEWMAN: Man, I feel like a new man. (laughter)

MISS MORGAN: I have a feeling that we're in Ome. Put on your sunglasses, everyone. It looks like the VW is ok. We'll get the dragon's fire, and soon we'll be home again.

DONNY: Gosh, that bush over there is on fire.

(Everybody runs over to see the bush -- tinsel in spotlight simulating fire).

MISS PRYSBY: Watch out! Don't get too close. You'll get burnt.

GAYNELL: But it isn't burning.

MISS PRYSBY: Of course it's burning. Can't you see that it's on fire?

GAYNELL: But it's not burning. It's just on fire.

MISS MORGAN: Why that's the fire that doesn't burn.

ASTRONAUT (booming voice from behind stage):
Beware!

MISS PRYSBY (screams): The bush is talking!

DONNY: Gosh, no, Miss Prysby. It's the astronaut over there.

(Enter ASTRONAUT).

ASTRONAUT: Stand back from that bush. Return to the water. This area is contaminated. Radioactive material.

MISS MORGAN: What's wrong: Did somebody drop a bomb or something?

ASTRONAUT (coming closer): No, but there are strange cosmic rays here. We are studying them now.

MISS MORGAN: Are these children in danger here?
Where did all this radiation come from?

ASTRONAUT: We really don't know. The sun is the main source of these rays, and it's quite puzzling to find such a strong source here.

MISS MORGAN: Oh, then it's perfectly natural. You see, the Dragon of Ome -- sometimes called the Lizard of Oz -- swallowed the sun. It's in his belly. Have you seen the dragon?

ASTRONAUT: Can't say that I have. But that doesn't mean he's not around. I can't see much in this outfit. But there seems to be a very strong source of that radiation up over that hill. It acts on people like a giant magnet. It pulls

people toward it, and they stand glued to a single spot mumbling "Ome" over and over again. It's very strange. I'll have to tell my partners about this dragon business. From what we've seen so far, I'd almost be willing to believe anything.

(exit ASTRONAUT).

Scene 17

(KIDS start moving toward the back of the auditorium -- i.e., up the hill -- going down the center aisle. When they get to the back, they stop and turn around and start looking into the distance, like they're on top of the hill. MISS PRYSBY and MISS MORGAN follow them calling for them to wait.)

KIDS (typical comments):

- (1) I've never been so high, except on Mt. Parnassus.
- (2) Everything's so green.
- (3) The green green grass of Ome.

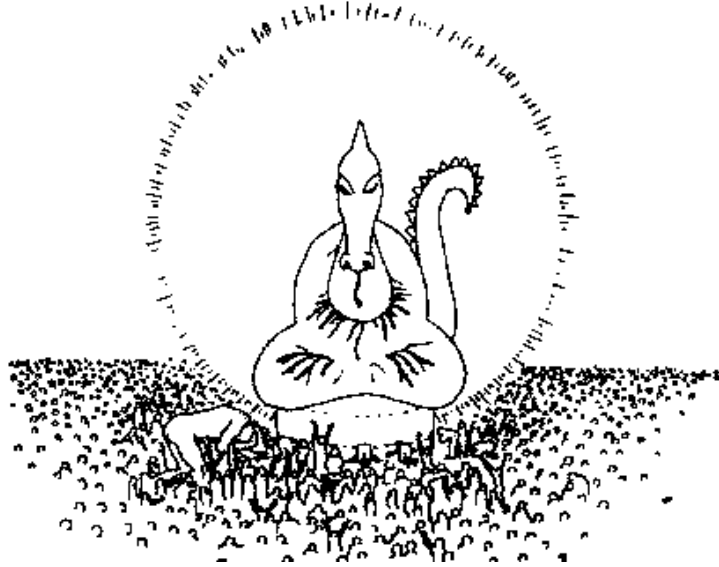
(Curtain opens revealing the Lizard of Oz.)

- (4) Look! Way over there! It's the dragon.
- (5) The Great Dragon of Ome.
- (6) The Lizard of Oz.
- (7) The Leaping Lizard himself.

LINDA: The zoo's a really nice place to see strange animals. There are bears and everything, and everything's safe.

KIDS (typical comments):

- (1) I'm scared.
- (2) I want to go home.



(Someone starts singing "Puff the Magic Dragon," and everybody joins in. Kids laugh and start to play. Teachers watch, not knowing what to do. In the background, from onstage they start to hear the chant "Ome, Ome, Ome..." over and over).

MARK: What's that?

MISS PRYSBY: It must be a football game or something. They're chanting the name of the home team. But it's funny; if I shut my eyes, I could think I was in the Far East, listening to some religious chant.

MARK: Where's the Far East? Is it in Maine somewhere?

MISS PRYSBY: No, it's on the other side of the world.

DONNY: Miss Prysby, come quick! There's somebody over here in chains.

CHAINED PERSON (in the center aisle): Don't free me. I don't trust myself. I'm drawn to it. It can't be that good. They're just trying to get me to crack up.

PRAYING PERSON (also in the center aisle, bowing and praying): Oh, radiant being, light of lights, very god of very gods...)

PERSON IN PAIN (also in the aisle): Stop. It hurts> Please don't pull me there. Please. I don't think I can stop myself. It feels too good.

MISS MORGAN: Everyone back to the top of the hill. We shouldn't expose the children to this. I'll run ahead and get that special fire we came for. (Holds up the stick/torch.) If I go fast, I think I'll be all right.
(She starts running down the aisle toward the stage.)

NEWMAN: Man, she can't fight that dragon all by herself.
(He follows her.)

(MISS PRYSBY holds back the children, as best she can. DONNY breaks away, then KATHY, then MARK, then MISS PRYSBY and the rest of the children follow, running toward the stage. When they arrive on stage with the Lizard, lots of wild movement. LINDA starts singing "Joshua at the Battle of Jericho". Everyone joins in for one chorus, and dances around. At the second chorus, the kids throw flowers at the Lizard.)

MISS MORGAN: Hold his mouth open!....I've got it!
(Reaching toward the Lizard's mouth and turning on the

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flashlight/torch. Spotlight shines on the torch-holding hand.) We'll bring back fire to the world!

(KIDS stand on stage cheering. Curtain closes.)

Scene 18

(Everyone piles into the VW.)

MISS MORGAN: I'm stepping on the gas. (Pantomime starting, then riding on bumpy road.) We'll soon be home.

KIDS (typical comments):

- (1) I'm starving. I hope we'll be in time for supper.
- (2) I've still got to go to the bathroom.
- (3) What a great field trip.
- (4) Can we go again next week, Miss Morgan? Can we?

MISS PRYSBY: Look! We're back in Sharon. Here's Bay Road, and we're turning into Wilshire Drive. There's Woodbridge and Peacock Place. We're home! There's the school.

(Everybody lurches forward as MISS MORGAN hits the brakes. Then everyone piles out. MISS MORGAN goes up the steps to the stage with the torch in hand. Sound of airplanes, then "Humdrum Humbug, beating on his humdrum..." repeated monotonously. MISS MORGAN trips. Torch hits the curtain. Great splash of colored light.)

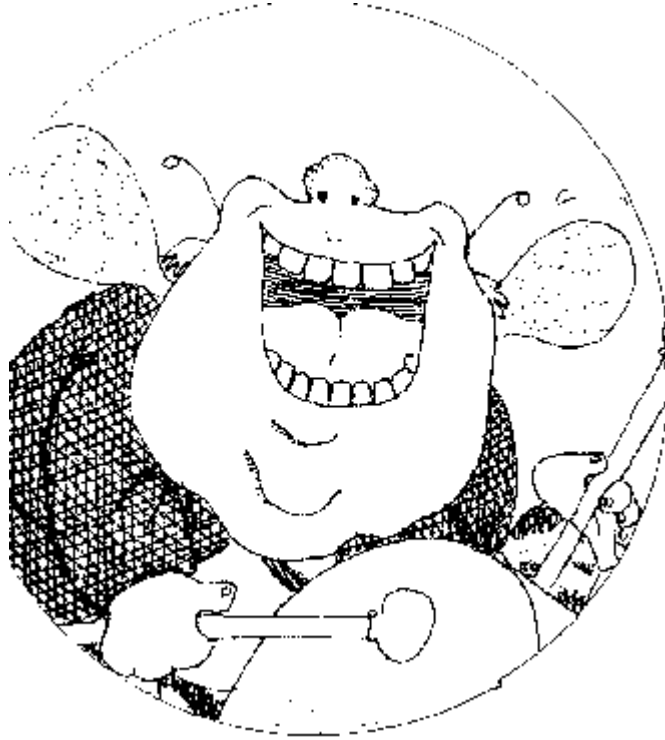
NEWMAN: Out of sight.

DONNY: Gosh, everything's beautiful.

KEVIN: Miss Morgan, why wasn't it always this way?

NEWMAN: You mean it wasn't always this way?

(The "Humdrum Humbug" recording switches to a drummer's dance beat. Enter MR. SHERMIN, running down the center aisle. KIDS greet him.)



MR. SHERMIN: Marvelous, simply marvelous. I never really believed it could be this way. I came rushing back thinking you'd all be depressed and run down after going through all that for nothing. I hoped that what I had learned would cheer you up a bit, maybe give you some hope. And

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now I'm greeted with this. It makes my head swim, like when I turned myself into a fish.

MISS PRYSBY: What did you learn, Mr. Shermin:

MR. SHERMIN: It suddenly struck me that this class was enchanted. Regardless of what was going on in the world around them, these children were enchanted. Enchantment is in you. It's a spark in you that glows and fades and maybe never totally goes out. I hope it never totally goes out. But it's in you. You don't have to go chasing to the ends of the earth; it's in you.

But now I see this.

(Everyone stares at the colored lights playing on the curtain; then they start to cheer and dance to the drumming music. The curtain opens about 3 feet; they all dance through; then the curtain closes.)

THE END