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Train #6

Austin Worth

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As they cut through the palace, Scarecrow was stopped for pictures, with children and parents and autograph seekers. Babies would cry and cameras would shoot, and little children pulled clumps of straw from his dirty red boots.

Scarecrow went alone to the top of the west tower, and sat down on the floor to think for an hour. He looked out the window to survey the new Oz. He saw tourists with cameras, wearing shirts that said, "I SAW THE WIZARD," with matching hats on their head. Palace guards ran back and forth, cleaning crews too, as the noise of the people rumbled and grew.

As the sun went down, and the air turned brown, Scarecrow looked at his boots and saw three pieces of straw. The power lines hummed and the traffic droned on, and he lost himself in a really long thought.

"Scarecrow...Scarecrow!"

Scarecrow looked up.

It was Tinman.

"I said the sun is coming up...you haven't said a word all night."

"Is it time for more pictures?"

"What pictures do you mean? Do you feel all right?"

Scarecrow stood up and looked out on green rolling hills. He saw the grass and the trees and brick roads in the fields.

"I must have thought it all up," he said half out-loud.

"Thought what?" asked the Tinman, raising his brow.

"Oh I thought the most wondrous things..." but he trailed off as he spoke.

Scarecrow looked down at his boots, at Tinman and then, he looked out the window once more and again. Without saying a word, he ran out of the room, down the tower, through the palace and out the city gates. Little bits of straw fell to the ground, but he had no time to waste. He dashed down the brick road, through the haunted woods, through the valleys and fields until he knew where he stood—at his cornfields once home, with the pole he once loved.

He stared at the pole, grabbed the cross bar and climbed. As he extended each arm, he saw nails rusted with lime. He lifted his legs and kicked his boots to the dirt. Then the straw in his legs began to slide out first. Straw after straw fell down and around, his clothes became loose, his chest fell to the ground. He could no longer look up, only forward and down. Out of the corner of his eye he saw his boots as they lay.

Then he thought his last thought:

"This is a good day."

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