

## Chapter 5

And with that, the Gates slowly yawned open before her and she cautiously stepped through, wondering whether at any moment she might find herself back under the tree in her school yard. She could almost taste her Mother's oatmeal M&M cookies nestled in her lunchbox...

And then the Gates closed with a loud clang. Ophelia stared at the closed gates, wondering whether she had made a monumental mistake. *Well, like it or not, I guess I'm on an adventure.*

As she turned around, she was surprised by what she saw. She saw something quite different - quite unexpected.

Ophelia cautiously stepped out into this strange place and looked about - she was definitely not back at her school, nor was she at home in her bedroom. As a matter of fact, she was nowhere that she could remember ever having been before. *Hmmm...wherever have I gotten myself to now?"* she wondered. *Is this my fate?*

She looked around and discovered that she was surrounded by a miniature town filled with curiously-shaped little houses painted the most fantastic colors she had ever seen. She began strolling about looking into the tiny yards, plucking tiny apples from the tiny apple trees and peering down stubby,

little chimneys. But, however hard she looked, she found no one or anything alive.

She had just about come to the conclusion that this town was deserted and that she was hopelessly lost and would never get back to her peanut butter and jelly sandwich and her mother's oatmeal M&M cookie. At first, this made her very unhappy, because she was actually quite hungry (she had skipped eating her snack at morning recess because her mother had given her one of those low-carb power bars that she hated so much. If she was going to eat, she was going to eat something that tasted good. Who cares about the calories and carbs and sugar and ANYTHING? She began to feel very alone and scared. A whimper began to form in her throat.

But, then another thought occurred to Ophelia - she was alone - yes, she was alone. She didn't know where she was - she didn't know what was going on or how she was going to get back home. BUT - she was alone. For the first time in her life she didn't have any nagging teachers, mean friends, overbearing parents or bothersome brothers around to endure. Ophelia had no idea where she was or where she was going, but she was excited that she was finally, completely, and utterly ALONE. This was her adventure...*I think I'll call it Ophelia's Odyssey*, she suddenly decided.

She breathed a sigh of

confidence. She was on her own. For the first time, she was in charge of her destiny. Whatever happened, she would be responsible for it. She felt a surge of pride.

She looked about her at the strange little town and wondered what she should do. She bent over and peered down the chimney of the nearest house to her, when she felt a slight tug on her dress.

"Excuse us, but are you the Good Witch of the South?" a tiny voice asked.

She turned around and looked, but saw no one there. *Am I hearing voices now?* she thought to herself.

"Excuse us, Your Highness, but are you the Good Witch of the South? We don't know who else would have killed the Wicked Witch of the East like that!" the tiny voices implored.

Ophelia looked around again, but she still saw no one.

"We're down here!!" the tiny voices shouted.

Ophelia slowly looked down and saw, to her astonishment, a group of miniature people with tiny little dresses and waistcoats standing in the road looking up at her with pleading eyes.

"I'm sorry, but I'm sure I haven't the slightest idea what you are talking about."

The tiny people turned and pointed over to a farmhouse she had just stepped out of. The Great Gates of Fate were no longer there - just

an old, battered old wooden door. Just to the right of the door she had made her grand entrance through were a pair of legs with pointy little red, ruby shoes and striped socks on. To her horror, she realized that the house she had come out of had crushed whoever was connected to those legs.

"I'm so sorry. I didn't mean to hurt anybody. As a matter of fact, I've never even seen that house before. I was at school when I suddenly..."

Ophelia didn't get to finish that sentence either, because just as she was trying to explain herself to these tiny people, hundreds of other little people began poking their heads out of their miniature houses and cautiously crept out to join them. They all walked up to the scene with the house and the dead legs and Ophelia and the tiny people who had been talking to her. They turned their heads in unison to see the dead, striped legs with the pointy boots under the house. The crowd parted as a distinguished, official-looking little man waddled up and examined the witch's legs. He then slowly turned to face Ophelia and announced in a tiny, loud voice (if that's possible):

"This girl has decidedly, undeniably, and irrevocably murdered the Wicked Witch of the South!" Everyone gasped and turned to stare at Ophelia. She began to stammer, "B-b-b-b I didn't mean to...I-I-I was

just..." When suddenly all the tiny little people burst out into song:

*"Ding dong the Witch is dead  
The wicked witch, the mean old  
witch*

*Ding dong the wicked witch is  
dead."*

They danced around the street and came over to Ophelia and picked her up on their shoulders (which was no mean feat, as Ophelia was a rather plump little girl) and began carrying her about their town in a grand parade.

*Ding dong the Witch is dead  
The wicked witch, the mean old  
witch*

*Ding dong the....*

Suddenly, their celebration was interrupted when the door to the farmhouse slammed open, and out stepped another young girl, about Ophelia's age.

"Excuuuuuse me, but what exactly do you think you're doing? I'm the girl who lives in this house and I'm the one who crushed the Witch of the South, thank you very much!!" she stated indignantly.

Everyone stopped in stunned silence. All heads slowly turned to look at this strange new person, not knowing what to say or think. Ophelia looked at the strange girl and thought to herself, "I think I know her...she seems very familiar..."

"I'm Dorothy, for crying out

loud!! Am I the only person here who knows this story? Hello!! This is Munchkin land, isn't it?"

The little man who had talked to Ophelia first said, "We're sorry, Dorothy, it was just that she was the first person out of the house, and you've always been the first person out of the house...I mean the only person out of the house", he looked around nervously, "so we thought that perhaps you had just had a nose job and gotten some new clothes and put on a little weight and.."

"SHUT UP!!!" Dorothy bellowed at the top of her lungs.

The Munchkins cowered back to their houses. Dorothy slowly walked over to Ophelia.

"Well, well, little princess. What do we have here? An impostor? A party crasher? A loser - a groupie?"

Needless to say, Ophelia was quite taken aback. Her little odyssey was beginning to get confusing. First Lilith, now Dorothy and the Land of Oz. She really just wanted to be back at school eating her lunch and reading her book (which was really only a book, she thought to herself.) She looked at Dorothy, not knowing exactly what to say.

"I'm terribly sorry. I was just trying to get back home..."

"THAT'S MY LINE! Stop stealing my story or I'll pull your hair out. As a matter of fact, I know some

monkeys that would love to have a new playmate."

"Oh, my. That would be terrible. You wouldn't want do that, would you?" Ophelia begged.

"Just try me, you little twerp."

"Dorothy is beginning to get quite the foul mouth, don't you think?" the nearest Munchkin whispered to a friend.

"I heard that you little runt! I'm the star of this story and don't forget it! Without me you don't exist." Dorothy screamed.

"I think I'll just be leaving now, if you don't mind." Ophelia said as she slowly crept away from the crowd.

"Just where do you think you're going to go?" Dorothy challenged.

"Well, there is the Yellow Brick Road..." Ophelia began.

"That's my road - stay off of it or I'll drop a house on your head!" Dorothy was starting to turn red in the face. Ophelia didn't remember this part of the story, although she had never actually read the original L. Frank Baum stories, so she supposed it could be true...

The official-looking man waddled up to Ophelia and whispered to her, "There is the Purple Path of Pebbles." As he pointed in the opposite direction.

"Where does it lead?" Ophelia

queried.

"We don't know. It's not part of this story, so nobody uses it. The only road anyone mentions is the Yellow Brick Road."

"Well, I think that'd be an excellent choice, if you ask me." Dorothy interrupted.

"Okay, I can take a hint." Ophelia said in a voice that betrayed her hurt.

"Good luck...whatever your name is." The Munchkins called after her as she began walking down the Purple Path of Pebbles.

Dorothy just stood and glared at her until she disappeared around a bend. She turned to the Munchkins and said in her sweetest voice, "Wherever am I? I was at home trying to find my Auntie Em when a tornado came and I hit my head and how here I am. This is the most curious place I've ever seen..."

The Munchkins cooed in unison. "Oooooohhhhhh..."