

Characters Dorothy: A little girl Aunt Em: Dorothy's Aunt Uncle Henry: Aunt Em's husband Gonzinta: A beautiful fairy Miss Take: A wicked witch Scared Joe: A brainless boy Cowardly Lionel: A boy who is afraid of arithmetic Tim Woodenhead: A boy who

hasn't the heart for arithmetic Twelve Elves: The Happy Numbers, 1-12 Fives Elves: The Symbols—Plus, Minus, Times, Divided By, Equals

The Wizard of Arithmetic

The Elves are dressed in brown and green suits showing symbols and numbers. Other characters are dressed in typical fashion.

#### Scene I

(Dorothy sits in the dining room with her back to the window. It is after supper, and Aunt Em is cleaning the table. She folds the tablecloth as Uncle Henry comes in from the porch.)

Uncle Henry: Dorothy, didn't you say you were having trouble with your arithmetic?

Dorothy: Yes, Uncle Henry. Especially division. It's very hard. We studied division, but I was absent at the first and I'm having trouble catching up on it. I have all of these examples to do for my homework. (She picks up a book and opens it to show Uncle Henry her problems.) I'll never finish.

Uncle Henry: Now, now, Dorothy, division isn't that bad. Practice on those examples will make it easier for you. I'll tell you what—I'll take your place in the kitchen tonight. I'll help Aunt Em with the dishes so that you can sit right here and get your homework done. We'll be in the next room so you can call us if you need any help. I used to be pretty good in division.

Aunt Em: There, Dorothy, the



table is all cleared and ready for you to work on. Do you have everything you need?

*Dorothy*: Yes, thank you, Aunt Em. All my books are here, and I have paper and pencils.

(Aunt Em and Uncle Henry smile at Dorothy and leave the stage. Dorothy opens her book and copies the first example on her paper.)

Dorothy: Let's see—eighteen divided by three...we had that in class,...it ought to be easy. But, oh dear, when I do arithmetic my head is in such a whirl.

(She holds her head in her hands. Her head and arms sink slowly down onto the table. A breeze blows through the room and scatters the papers on the floor. In her excitement to pick up the papers, Dorothy knocks her book off of the table as the curtains close.)

## Scene II

(Gozinta, a lovely fairy, is standing under a tree where lies a wicked looking witch who has been knocked into an unconscious state. Dorothy is staring down at the witch.)

Dorothy: Who is this ugly witch? Who are you? Where am I anyway?

Gozinta: I am Gozinta, the good fairy, who helps boys and girls to learn to divide numbers. This is the Land of Happy Numbers, but there is one person who has spoiled things for us here. She is this wicked witch, Miss Take. You have stunned her into unconsciousness with your arithmetic book.

Dorothy: I didn't know that I did that. How did I do it? How did I get here?

Gozinta: Your book struck Miss Take on the head. You came in on a brainstorm. There was a whirlwind...

Dorothy: Well, my brain was in a whirl over my arithmetic lesson, I know that.

Gozinta: Maybe I can help you. I am going to send you to see the Wizard of Arithmetic. He knows all the answers. Perhaps he can show you how to solve your problems.

(At this moment from behind a low wall at the back comes a boy dressed in overalls. He is very timid.)

Scared Joe: Oh, Gozinta, may I go with this little girl to find the Wizard of Arithmetic? I've always been afraid to do my number problems. I've been afraid of Miss Take. And besides, my teachers say I haven't any brains. My name is Scared Joe. I would really like to learn about numbers.

(A second boy leaps over the wall.)

*Cowardly Lionel*: They call me Cowardly because I, too, am afraid to try my lessons in arithmetic. My name is really Lionel, but I am afraid I am cowardly all right and deserve to be called "Cowardly Lionel." I would like to learn more about numbers, too, so that a hard problem won't scare me before I even try to work it.

(A third boy leaps over the wall.) *Tim Woodenhead*: May I please go to see the Wizard, too? My name is Tim Woodenhead. I want to learn arithmetic but I really have never had the heart for it. Maybe if we all tried to learn together it would be easier and more fun.

Gozinta: You are probably right, Tim. Yes, you may all see the Wizard if you will just follow this road. (She points off stage.) It is called "Practice" and it will lead you to a city called "Perfect." There you will be met by the Wizard himself. Good-bye and good luck.

## Scene III

(Numbers 1-12 are dancing in a circle, while the symbols, Plus, Minus, Times, Divided By and Equals, are in the center trying unsuccessfully to duck out of the ring amid laughter and shouting. The Wizard comes from one side of the stage as the four children enter from the opposite side.)

*Wizard*: Well, well, my dears, here you are. The good fairy Gozinta sent me a special message that you were coming. (He takes out a whistle and blows on it. The circle of elves breaks up and the Numbers line up in order. The Symbols run off the stage.)

Wizard: There, my little friends, are the Happy Numbers. Numbers, this is Dorothy, who thinks you are making arithmetic hard for her. (Dorothy steps forward and curtsies to the Numbers.) And here are three boys who are afraid of you. (The beys step forward and join Dorothy. They bow timidly.) I want you to show these children how much fun you have playing together. Let's show them some of your tricks.

(Wizard blows his whistle again. In order, the Numbers do the following tricks. Whistle signals the changes.)

1. Odd numbers draw back and climb on wall.

2. Numbers line up in reverse order and then in correct order.

3. Numbers 3, 6 and 9 step out in a line while the others turn their backs.

4. Numbers 5 and 10 join hands and skip together.

5. Numbers 11 and 1 stand on their heads.

(These tricks may be supplemented by as many more as desired.)

Dorothy: My, aren't they clever? But what happened to the other elves?

*Wizard*: They ran off when I blew my whistle. They are a little bashful.

## Scared Joe: Are they? Why?

*Wizard*: They feel that people don't like them because they mean hard work. They are really good helpers. I'll coax them back to show we want them. (He calls.) Yoo Hoo! Oh, Plus and Minus. Come here please, and the others, too. We need you to play games. I want the children to see how much fun we have here.

(The five Symbols come immediately. One turns his back and peeks shyly around.)

(See Arithmetic Page 46)

## ARITHMETIC

## (From Page 12)

*Tim*: That one's cute. What's your name?

*Divided By:* My name's Divided By. Have you ever heard of me? *Children*: (Showing disappoint-

ment.) We certainly have.

Wizard: Come now. It isn't his fault you don't like arithmetic. Let's have some more tricks. (Blows whistle and various exercises are done. The Wizard announces the first half of each exercise, while the Number elves complete each one. As many exercises as desired may be done.)

3+9=12 2x5=10 3+4=7 4x2=86x2=12 5+3=8 5+6=11 2+7=98+2=10 3x4=12 4+5=9 3x2=6*Lionel*: But those are easy examples. Those are just addition and multiplication. It's subtraction and division that are hard. *Wizard*: Subtraction and division are hard because they are backward processes. Can you walk backwards? Dorothy: I guess I could if I'd practice. (She tries, wavers, but gets better with practice.)

*Wizard*: There, that wasn't so bad. If you know very well how to go frontwards, it doesn't take long to learn how to go backwards. Now look at these backwards tricks.

(At the first whistle, a multiplication example is set up. At a double whistle, the division example is set up. It is suggested that the multiplication symbol and division symbol lock arms so they are back to back. When the multiplication example is set up the times sign faces the audience; when the division example is set up the multiplication and division symbols about face so the division symbol faces the audience. The addition and subtraction symbols do like wise. The Wizard announces each example. Either one or both of the division examples may be given.)

 $3x_4=12$   $12\div 3=4$   $12\div 4=3$ 8+3=11 11-3=8 11-8=3

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P. O. Box 7600 Chicago 80, Illinois Sam Sprout, Representative 508 County Hills Drive Webster Groves 19, Missouri  $2x_5=10$   $10\div 2=5$   $10\div 5=2$ Joe: Why that was all right!

Wizard: Do you want to help with the tricks?

Children: How can we?

*Wizard*: We'll leave off the answers and you bring the correct number to fill in the answer.

(He calls out the following examples. The Children, in turn, think a moment, then step out and bring the correct number by the hand to complete the example.)

How about those examples? *Tim*: They were fun. As long as you know the multiplication facts, division isn't hard at all.

(A sharp barking is heard off stage.)

Dorothy: Oh, that's my little dog Total. I guess he wants me to come home now. (She runs off stage, picks up the dog and brings him back on stage in her arms.) Wizard: Do you think you can do your homework now?

Dorothy: Yes, I'm sure I can.

Joe: Good-bye, Wizard, and thank you.

Numbers & Symbols: Goodbye. Come again. (Wizard waves.)

## Scene IV

(Dorothy is again seated at the table as in Scene I.)

Dorothy: Let's see, where was I? I'll have to work fast. Eighteen divided by 6...that's 3 because 3 times 6 is 18. The next one has bigger numbers, but I guess I can do it all right. Forty-five divided by 9 is 5 because 9 times 5 is 45 (etc.)

(Dorothy quickly writes numbers and is finished when Aunt Em and Uncle Henry enter from the kitchen.)

Uncle Henry: We had a lot of work to do in the kitchen or we would have come in to see if you needed any help.

Aunt Em: Did you get your examples all right?

Dorothy: Oh, yes, I've found out that numbers can be fun. I'm never going to be afraid of them again.

(The curtain closes.)