

The Wizard of Odd

by Carole Gauntlett

After I divorced in 1967 I explained to my two- and five-year-old children as well as to myself that there would be some things that we *could* afford and others we could not. Among the things we *could* afford was a small black and white television set. We chose our one hour of what to watch by family vote. Since my daughter adored her older brother, we watched too many episodes of *Lost In Space* but basically television was not a high priority with us. The one, all inclusive, unrestricted televised presentation once every year was *The Wizard of Oz*. From the first year, the tradition seemed to mimic Thanksgiving, requiring the specific meal we'd enjoyed the first time. Baby-back ribs, baking powder biscuits and ice cream brownies for dessert.

In the next five years the TV production and the meal were things that continued in their comforting way each March on a select Sunday afternoon. In the meantime I had met the wonderful second part of my life. He and my children had engaged happily with one another.

It was a coincidence that *The Wizard of Oz* was to be shown on a day that we were spending with him at his home. He and I were in the kitchen preparing the rib dinner when we heard shouting and shrieking from the living room. "Mom! You won't believe this!" "Mom! Hurry! You won't believe what just happened!" This was the first time they'd ever seen the black and white images switch to color on the Yellow Brick Road. I'd forgotten myself, having seen the real film years before. That particular viewing remains vivid in our memories.

About two months later he and I fearfully sat down with the children to discuss the fact that he'd like to marry us. There was silence for a few moments and then they wanted to know if he'd bring his colored TV. Our new family was born.

They stopped even making black and white TVs and today I have a fairly small flat screen TV which my children constantly tell me to upgrade and I tell them "It's what I can afford."