

The Wizard Plays Rock, Paper, Scissors

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The Sawhorse trotted down a dirt path in the country outside of the Emerald City. The sun hovered overhead, making shadows of the tree branches that hung over the path, keeping the Red Wagon cool for Dorothy and the Wizard, who was holding the reins.

“What a beautiful day!” Dorothy declared. “This ride was a great idea.”

The Wizard nodded contentedly. “And peaceful. I haven’t seen anyone on the road since we left the Emerald City gates.”

“It’s warm,” Dorothy pointed out. “Maybe everyone is in.”

“That it where you’re wrong!” a high-pitched voice called from the trees ahead.

Three figures pounced down from the overhanging branches in front of the wagon. The Sawhorse slid to a halt before the Wizard could pull on the reins. Dorothy grabbed onto her seat to keep from flying out.

“We are the Three Masters!” the figure in the middle of the trio declared regally. She was tall and thin, her pale blonde hair was cut severely above her shoulders, and she carried herself regally and proud as she crossed two sabers over her chest. “I am Scissors!”

The stout, muscled man on her right stepped forward. “I am Rock!” he scowled.

The opposite man was pale and flat. He stepped into a perfect fighting stance. “I am Paper!”

“We challenge you to a duel!” They shouted in unison.

The Wizard and Dorothy sat in stunned silence for several seconds. “I’m sorry, I don’t think I caught all that,” the Wizard finally said.

“I told you we should have started with the rules,” Paper snapped. His eyes were looking at Scissors, but he was still in position to fight.

“For the fifteenth time, dear brother,” Scissors chided. She broke her stance to berate him. “You want to start with intimidation.”

“Do you really keep count?” Rock asked.

“You can’t even count!” Scissors turned to him. “You’re named Rock for the amount in your head!”

“You want to start?” he shouted. “I can take you down!”

“Everyone knows I always beat you,” Paper had finally broken his stance to contribute to the argument.

“I wasn’t talking to you, Flimsy!”

“I’m not flimsy! I’m flexible!” As if to prove a point, he folded himself into a pretzel shape while still standing.

“Pardon me,” Dorothy intruded onto their conversation. “I don’t want to be rude, but weren’t you talking about a duel?”

“Yes,” Scissors brushed her fencing outfit, despite not having done anything yet. “The duel. You cannot pass us until one of you beats us in a duel.”

“Yes,” Paper confirmed. “My siblings and I are masters of our crafts. I am a martial arts black belt. I learned to limber my limbs among the paper dolls in Miss Cuttenclip’s country.” He gestured to the black cloth belt tied around his waist.

“I’m a wrestler!” Rock jumped off the ground and hit the ground with his fists when he landed. He made the Wizard think of gorillas he had seen during his days in the circus. “I learned to crush rocks at the bottom of Mount Munch when I wasn’t brawling with kalidahs.”

“And I…” Scissors raised her arm with a flourish. The sword in her hand flashed in the light that passed the tree shadows. “Am a swordswoman! I trained with the bravest soldiers of the Spoon Brigade in Utensia. I am the greatest in the world in the most noble of weapons.”

Paper huffed and rolled his eyes. “You’re only dangerous with sharp sticks. I can harm someone with just my body.”

“At least my cuts are lethal! No one is harmed by a papercut!”

“Go fold yourself!” Paper shoved his sister.

“Cut it out!” Scissors cried before pouncing on him, her swords brandished. Paper folded under her blades but he kept fighting.

“Time for a stoning!” Rock ran into the fray, excited for a fight, and body slammed his siblings into a brawling pile of fists and blades.

“Nobody’s winning,” Dorothy said to the Wizard.

“Indeed, they are all equally skilled in their arts,” the Wizard declared.

“But who do we choose to fight? We can’t wrestle or fight martial arts.”

“We also don’t have a sword either.”

“Do you have your pistols in your bag? Maybe you can challenge one with those. Or just use your magic to make them disappear?”

The Wizard reached down to the floor of the wagon and grabbed his black bag. He snapped it open and scrounged around inside. The unseen contents rustled around inside. The Wizard shook his head. “No, I left them at the Palace.” Then he beamed as something in his bag caught his eye. “And magic won’t be necessary in this situation. I believe I found a solution to our conundrum.”

Dorothy looked at the object the Wizard pulled out of his bag. “What is that?”

“A prototype I have been working on for Ozma’s next birthday,” the Wizard replied. “But I used too much gunpowder so it’s too dangerous. I was looking for a safe place to dispose of it, but I think we will get better use of it now.”

As they spoke, the Three Masters were still battling amongst themselves, none of the three gaining the upper hand.

“Masters! I will accept your challenge!” the Wizard called.

The trio suddenly ceased their tussle. They stood and brushed the dust from their clothes. “Excellent, adversary!” Scissors approved. “Which of us have you chosen?”

“All three of you!” the Wizard replied.

Paper raised his eyebrow, looking puzzled. “How unconventional.”

“It’s different, too,” Rock added as he scratched his head.

“But I do love a change of pace!” Scissors exclaimed. “Very well, adversary, we accept.”

The Wizard took a couple of items out of his bag and jumped down from the wagon. He took a position far ahead of the Sawhorse and the wagon. The Three Masters stood opposite of him. They took their fighting positions.

Dorothy watched nervously. Was the Wizard going to use magic? But those fighters looked pretty intimidating. The Wizard was just standing there.

“Let us commence!” shouted Scissors.

“I shall make the first move!” Paper declared.

“Me first!” Rock insisted.

“No, brothers, I shall make the first move on our opponent!” Scissors explained.

As the siblings argued, the Wizard revealed his weapon: a stick of dynamite. He lit the fuse with a lighter and tossed it at their feet before the fighters could settle. Dorothy covered her ears as the Wizard rushed back to the wagon to escape the impending blast.

The stick exploded; the Masters flew in different directions as they cried in surprise. They landed with three separate thuds on the grass. Scissors and Rock were on one side of the road and Paper had fallen on the other side. The three glanced at each other with wide eyes.

“Run brothers!” Scissors shouted, “This man is greater than all of us!”

The Three Masters scattered in different directions, defeated and terrified of the Wizard's power. Meanwhile, the Wizard calmly returned to the wagon and ascended back into the driver's seat.

"How did you know that would work?" Dorothy asked, amazed.

He turned to her with a sly smile. "In every game of Rock-Paper-Scissors, dynamite always wins."

Dorothy giggled as the Sawhorse started his trot back to the Emerald City. She couldn't wait to tell Ozma what had happened.