

# The Witches and Wizards of Ozz Kingdoms Divided



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The bruised and battered serpent waited until they had all gone and crept out from the grove of trees, fourteen feet long with a head as large as a pony's head and two fangs that are six inches long, which fold back into his mouth until he strikes and injects his lethal venom into his victims. Dazed, he hurries to the marsh, where he and the other serpents feel safe to slither back to their kingdom, where he sends an alarm about the witches' arrival.

When Elmira and Amanda vanished into the grove of trees, she came up behind a giant serpent, and then Amanda appeared in front of it. It strikes at blazing speed, but Amanda reacts with lightning speed, grabs it by one of its fangs with her left hand, and then thrusts her dagger under its lower jaw with her right hand. Elmira changes the shape of a branch of a tree nearby into a sharp spike, and Amanda uses it to impel the serpent just behind his head; then Elmira changes the branch into a flat disk that holds the serpent in place against the tree.

The serpent's twelve-foot body was frantically moving about until Amanda grabbed it, and it stiffened as straight as a plank. The serpent could feel everything being done to it but found it impossible to move. Amanda used her dagger to cut the serpent's skin, starting from the back of his head and under his jaw, then cutting from the jaw back up to the top to complete the cut. She gripped the skin with her talons and began to pull, skinning the serpent alive. She then went around to his head, where his mouth was open, grabbed both of his four-inch fangs and slowly pulled them out of his mouth where his body coiled around the tree. Elmira vanished and came up behind another serpent larger than the other.

"Are you going somewhere?"

The serpent froze and then began to coil and would have tried to strike and slither away quickly, but he saw Amanda levitating towards him and then lowered his head submissively.

"I am your humble servant. How can I be of service to you?" The serpent asks, hissing.

"He speaks," Elmira and Amanda said in surprise.

"Yes, I can speak."

"Don't tell me; this is Eden, right?" Amanda said jokingly.

"I know not of this Eden you speak of, but you are in the World of Ozz." The serpent hissed, dragging the z in Qz as if saying Qzz.

"Are you the only one that speaks? Ask Elmira.

"No, we can all speak." The serpent looks for a way out.

"Then why didn't your friend over there say something?" Elmira asks.

"I believe he never got the chance to speak."

"Oh!" said Amanda, using one of the fangs of the other serpent to lift the serpent's head and look into her eyes. "He was too busy trying to put these into me rather than trying to communicate with us, is that it?"

"My brother was foolish, and that is why he is without his skin and impelled on that tree."

"Well, you sound like the intelligent one. Tell me, serpent, what can we expect in this... Ozz world we're in? Elmira asks.

"This world is full of creatures, even those like yourselves."

"Humans?" Amanda asks.

“Yes, some are more powerful than others.”

Elmira and Amanda stare at each other. “Sounds like home,” Elmira says.

“Tell us more, serpent,” Amanda demands.

“There are those that possess powers as yourselves, while others possess power in numbers and strength and are known as conning warriors.” He tells them of the many kingdoms in Ozz, but not of all while lying about his kingdom.

“Where is your kingdom?” Elmira asks.

“We are a humble and small nest in the marsh.” He answers.

“Humble, he says,” Amanda winks at Elmira. “Where we come from, serpents will strike you dead when you least expect it. Snakes in the grass like your brother over there.”

“So, serpent, where do you think we should go to seek shelter from these woods?” Elmira asks.

“The closest from here is the castle of the Gord, just northeast from here, but beware, they are warriors and are many, and you should let the male speak for you; no female is allowed to speak or enter into the great throne room of the king.”

When Elmira hears this, she slaps him on the side of the head with her talons.

Rearing back in great pain, “I meant you no wrong, my lady. I did not make this up. No female is allowed to speak to the Gord king, and none has ever entered the throne room; to do so can mean the death to the woman.”

“Is that so?” said Elmira. “We’ll see about that when we get there.”

“A castle, you say?” Amanda asks.

“Yes, a castle.” the serpent replied.

“Every castle needs a queen,” Amanda said, looking at Elmira.

“Yes, but not every Queen needs a King, and this Queen shares the throne with no man. Tell us of the other creatures we will have to deal with, and do we possess powers as we do? Elmira asks.

“There are two who possess the power you hold; one is old and on his last days, but the other is young and strong. The stronger seeks out across the land for one that will replace the old. The strong rules are in the north, and the weaker ones are in the center of the World of Ozz. Be warned, my ladies, her strength is immeasurable, and it has been said that she has only recently found the one that should take the place of the weak from among the few.”

“What do you mean from among the few?” Amanda asks curiously.

“I have not heard all the information yet; we were sent out to follow you when word came to me. That was before you came upon me.”

Amanda looks at Elmira, rubbing her hands together.

“There be wizards in the land.” She said, laughing, then she grabbed the head of the serpent and asked, “Is that it? There has to be more.” He tells them what he wants them to know for a couple of hours. Having heard enough, Elmira levitated away, and Amanda looked into the eyes of the serpent.

“You will do whatever I bid you do.” She takes the fang of the other serpent and uses it to cut him across his face, and then pricks her finger and presses it into the wound to force the

blood to flow, sealing the cut with her blood that seems to burn the serpent as it heals and leaves a scar across his face.

“Now, when I summon you, I expect you to answer.” She demands.

“Yes, my lady, as you wish.” He replies.

Amanda looked around and watched Elmira move through the woods toward the others; then, she warned the serpent.

“I am the only one that will summon you, and if you disobey, I’ll skin you alive the same way I skinned your serpent brother. Now, I want you to go and find out about that new wizard and report back to me, and I mean only me. Do you understand me, serpent?” She demands.

“Yes, I understand, my lady.” He replied.

“Good, now be off with you.” She commands.

Amanda turned and followed Elmira out of the grove and back to the valley where the others were sleeping.

The serpent slithers to his dead brother in anger.

“Brother,” he calls out as he turns his face away from the horror of the skinned and defanged fallen. The serpent’s nerves cause it to coil around the tree tightly in agony.

“They’ll pay for this. Your death will be avenged, I promise you, or I will die trying.” Bruised and wounded, he slithers to the edge of the grove and the marsh, watches as the visitors vanish from the valley, and slithers back into the marsh to rally the others.

“We must tell the queen we are free, gather our army, and surround the castle.”

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