

The Tin Woodman Of Oz

by
L. Frank Baum

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**First
Published**

1919

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CHAPTER 18 - THE TIN WOODMAN TALKS TO HIMSELF



The Tin Woodman had just noticed the cupboards and was curious to know what they contained, so he went to one of them and opened the door. There were shelves inside, and upon one of the shelves which was about on a level with his tin chin the Emperor discovered a Head—it looked like a doll’s head, only it was larger, and he soon saw it was the Head of some person. It was facing the Tin Woodman and as the cupboard door swung back, the eyes of the Head slowly opened and looked at him. The Tin Woodman was not at all surprised, for in the Land of Oz one runs into magic at every turn. “Dear me!” said the Tin Woodman, starting hard. “It seems as if I had met you, somewhere, before. Good morning, sir!”

“You have the advantage of me,” replied the Head. “I never saw you before in my life.”

“Still, your face is very familiar,” persisted the Tin Woodman. “Pardon me, but may I ask if you—eh—eh—if you ever had a Body?”

“Yes, at one time,” answered the Head, “but that is so long ago I can’t remember it. Did you think,” he said with a pleasant smile, “that I was born just as I am? That a Head would be created without a Body?”

“No, of course not,” said the other. “But how came you to lose your body?”

“Well, I can’t recollect the details; you’ll have to ask Ku-Klip about it,” returned the Head. “For, curious as it may seem to you, my memory is not good since my separation from the rest of me. I still possess my brains and my intellect is as good as ever, but my memory of some of the events I formerly experienced is quite hazy.”

“How long have you been in this cupboard?” asked the Emperor.

“I don’t know.”

“Haven’t you a name?”

“Oh, yes,” said the Head; “I used to be called Nick Chopper, when I was a woodman and cut down trees for a living.”

“Good gracious!” cried the Tin Woodman in astonishment. “If you are Nick Chopper’s Head, then you are Me—or I’m You—or—or—What relation are we, anyhow?”

“Don’t ask me,” replied the Head. “For my part, I’m not anxious to claim relationship with any common, manufactured article, like you. You may be all right in your class, but your class isn’t my class. You’re tin.”

The poor Emperor felt so bewildered that for a time he could only stare at his old Head in silence. Then he said: “I must admit that I wasn’t at all bad looking before I became tin.

You're almost handsome—for meat. If your hair was combed, you'd be quite attractive."

"How do you expect me to comb my hair without help?" demanded the Head, indignantly. "I used to keep it smooth and neat, when I had arms, but after I was removed from the rest of me, my hair got mussed, and old Ku-Klip never has combed it for me."

"I'll speak to him about it," said the Tin Woodman. "Do you remember loving a pretty Munchkin girl named Nimmie Amee?"

"No," answered the Head. "That is a foolish question. The heart in my body—when I had a body—might have loved someone, for all I know, but a head isn't made to love; it's made to think."

"Oh; do you think, then?"

"I used to think."

"You must have been shut up in this cupboard for years and years. What have you thought about, in all that time?"

"Nothing. That's another foolish question. A little reflection will convince you that I have had nothing to think about, except the boards on the inside of the cupboard door, and it didn't take me long to think of everything about those boards that could be thought of. Then, of course, I quit thinking."

"And are you happy?"

"Happy? What's that?"

"Don't you know what happiness is?" inquired the Tin Woodman.

"I haven't the faintest idea whether it's round or square, or black or white, or what it

is. And, if you will pardon my lack of interest in it, I will say that I don't care."

The Tin Woodman was much puzzled by these answers. His traveling companions had grouped themselves at his back, and had fixed their eyes on the Head and listened to the conversation with much interest, but until now, they had not interrupted because they thought the Tin Woodman had the best right to talk to his own head and renew acquaintance with it.

But now the Tin Soldier remarked:

"I wonder if my old head happens to be in any of these cupboards," and he proceeded to open all the cupboard doors. But no other head was to be found on any of the shelves.

"Oh, well; never mind," said Woot the Wanderer; "I can't imagine what anyone wants of a cast-off head, anyhow."

"I can understand the Soldier's interest," asserted Polychrome, dancing around the grimy workshop until her draperies formed a cloud around her dainty form. "For sentimental reasons a man might like to see his old head once more, just as one likes to revisit an old home."

"And then to kiss it good-bye," added the Scarecrow.

"I hope that tin thing won't try to kiss me good-bye!" exclaimed the Tin Woodman's former head. "And I don't see what right you folks have to disturb my peace and comfort, either."

"You belong to me," the Tin Woodman declared.

"I do not!"

"You and I are one."

“We’ve been parted,” asserted the Head. “It would be unnatural for me to have any interest in a man made of tin. Please close the door and leave me alone.”

“I did not think that my old Head could be so disagreeable,” said the Emperor. “I—I’m quite ashamed of myself; meaning you.”

“You ought to be glad that I’ve enough sense to know what my rights are,” retorted the Head. “In this cupboard I am leading a simple life, peaceful and dignified, and when a mob of people in whom I am not interested disturb me, they are the disagreeable ones; not I.”

With a sigh the Tin Woodman closed and latched the cupboard door and turned away.

“Well,” said the Tin Soldier, “if my old head would have treated me as coldly and in so unfriendly a manner as your old head has treated you, friend Chopper, I’m glad I could not find it.”

“Yes; I’m rather surprised at my head, myself,” replied the Tin Woodman, thoughtfully. “I thought I had a more pleasant disposition when I was made of meat.” But just then old Ku-Klip the Tinsmith arrived, and he seemed surprised to find so many visitors. Ku-Klip was a stout man and a short man. He had his sleeves rolled above his elbows, showing muscular arms, and he wore a leathern apron that covered all the front of him, and was so long that Woot was surprised he didn’t step on it and trip whenever he walked. And Ku-Klip had a gray beard that was almost as long as his apron, and his head was bald on top and his ears stuck

out from his head like two fans. Over his eyes, which were bright and twinkling, he wore big spectacles. It was easy to see that the tinsmith was a kind hearted man, as well as a merry and agreeable one. “Oh-ho!” he cried in a joyous bass voice; “here are both my tin men come to visit me, and they and their friends are welcome indeed. I’m very proud of you two characters, I assure you, for you are so perfect that you are proof that I’m a good workman. Sit down. Sit down, all of you—if you can find anything to sit on—and tell me why you are here.”

So they found seats and told him all of their adventures that they thought he would like to know. Ku-Klip was glad to learn that Nick Chopper, the Tin Woodman, was now Emperor of the Winkies and a friend of Ozma of Oz, and the tinsmith was also interested in the Scarecrow and Polychrome.

He turned the straw man around, examining him curiously, and patted him on all sides, and then said: “You are certainly wonderful, but I think you would be more durable and steady on your legs if you were made of tin. Would you like me to —”

“No, indeed!” interrupted the Scarecrow hastily; “I like myself better as I am.”

But to Polychrome the tinsmith said:

“Nothing could improve you, my dear, for you are the most beautiful maiden I have ever seen. It is pure happiness just to look at you.”

“That is praise, indeed, from so skillful a workman,” returned the Rainbow’s Daughter, laughing and dancing in and out the room.

“Then it must be this boy you wish me to help,” said Ku-Klip, looking at Woot.

“No,” said Woot, “we are not here to seek your skill, but have merely come to you for information.” Then, between them, they related their search for Nimmie Amee, whom the Tin Woodman explained he had resolved to marry, yet who had promised to become the bride of the Tin Soldier before he unfortunately became rusted. And when the story was told, they asked Ku-Klip if he knew what had become of Nimmie Amee. “Not exactly,” replied the old man, “but I know that she wept bitterly when the Tin Soldier did not come to marry her, as he had promised to do. The old Witch was so provoked at the girl’s tears that she beat Nimmie Amee with her crooked stick and then hobbled away to gather some magic herbs, with which she intended to transform the girl into an old hag, so that no one would again love her or care to marry her. It was while she was away on this errand that Dorothy’s house fell on the Wicked Witch, and she turned to dust and blew away. When I heard this good news, I sent Nimmie Amee to find the Silver Shoes which the Witch had worn, but Dorothy had taken them with her to the Emerald City.”

“Yes, we know all about those Silver Shoes,” said the Scarecrow.

“Well,” continued Ku-Klip, “after that, Nimmie Amee decided to go away from the forest and live with some people she was acquainted with who had a house on Mount Munch. I have never seen the girl since.”

“Do you know the name of the people on Mount Munch, with whom she went to live?” asked the Tin Woodman.

“No, Nimmie Amee did not mention her friend’s name, and I did not ask her. She took with her all that she could carry of the goods that were in the Witch’s house, and she told me I could have the rest. But when I went there I found nothing worth taking except some magic powders that I did not know how to use, and a bottle of Magic Glue.”

“What is Magic Glue?” asked Woot.

“It is a magic preparation with which to mend people when they cut themselves. One time, long ago, I cut off one of my fingers by accident, and I carried it to the Witch, who took down her bottle and glued it on again for me. See!” showing them his finger, “it is as good as ever it was. No one else that I ever heard of had this Magic Glue, and of course when Nick Chopper cut himself to pieces with his enchanted axe and Captain Fyter cut himself to pieces with his enchanted sword, the Witch would not mend them, or allow me to glue them together, because she had herself wickedly enchanted the axe and sword. Nothing remained but for me to make them new parts out of tin; but, as you see, tin answered the purpose very well, and I am sure their tin bodies are a great improvement on their meat bodies.”

“Very true,” said the Tin Soldier.

“I quite agree with you,” said the Tin Woodman. “I happened to find my old head in your cupboard, a while ago, and certainly it

is not as desirable a head as the tin one I now wear.”

“By the way,” said the Tin Soldier, “what ever became of my old head, Ku-Klip?”

“And of the different parts of our bodies?” added the Tin Woodman.

“Let me think a minute,” replied Ku-Klip. “If I remember right, you two boys used to bring me most of your parts, when they were cut off, and I saved them in that barrel in the corner. You must not have brought me all the parts, for when I made Chopfyt I had hard work finding enough pieces to complete the job. I finally had to finish him with one arm.”

“Who is Chopfyt?” inquired Woot.

“Oh, haven’t I told you about Chopfyt?” exclaimed Ku-Klip. “Of course not! And he’s quite a curiosity, too. You’ll be interested in hearing about Chopfyt. This is how he happened:

“One day, after the Witch had been destroyed and Nimmie Amee had gone to live with her friends on Mount Munch, I was looking around the shop for something and came upon the bottle of Magic Glue which I had brought from the old Witch’s house. It occurred to me to piece together the odds and ends of you two people, which of course were just as good as ever, and see if I couldn’t make a man out of them. If I succeeded, I would have an assistant to help me with my work, and I thought it would be a clever idea to put to some practical use the scraps of Nick Chopper and Captain Fyter. There were two perfectly good heads in my cupboard, and a lot of feet and legs and

parts of bodies in the barrel, so I set to work to see what I could do.

“First, I pieced together a body, gluing it with the Witch’s Magic Glue, which worked perfectly. That was the hardest part of my job, however, because the bodies didn’t match up well and some parts were missing. But by using a piece of Captain Fyter here and a piece of Nick Chopper there, I finally got together a very decent body, with heart and all the trimmings complete.”

“Whose heart did you use in making the body?” asked the Tin Woodman anxiously.

“I can’t tell, for the parts had no tags on them and one heart looks much like another. After the body was completed, I glued two fine legs and feet onto it. One leg was Nick Chopper’s and one was Captain Fyter’s and, finding one leg longer than the other, I trimmed it down to make them match. I was much disappointed to find that I had but one arm. There was an extra leg in the barrel, but I could find only one arm. Having glued this onto the body, I was ready for the head, and I had some difficulty in making up my mind which head to use. Finally I shut my eyes and reached out my hand toward the cupboard shelf, and the first head I touched I glued upon my new man.”

“It was mine!” declared the Tin Soldier, gloomily. “No, it was mine,” asserted Ku-Klip, “for I had given you another in exchange for it—the beautiful tin head you now wear. When the glue had dried, my man was quite an interesting fellow. I named him Chopfyt, using a part of Nick Chopper’s name and a part of

Captain Fyter's name, because he was a mixture of both your cast-off parts. Chopfyt was interesting, as I said, but he did not prove a very agreeable companion. He complained bitterly because I had given him but one arm—as if it were my fault!—and he grumbled because the suit of blue Munchkin clothes, which I got for him from a neighbor, did not fit him perfectly.”

“Ah, that was because he was wearing my old head,” remarked the Tin Soldier. “I remember that head used to be very particular about its clothes.”

“As an assistant,” the old tinsmith continued, “Chopfyt was not a success. He was awkward with tools and was always hungry. He demanded something to eat six or eight times a day, so I wondered if I had fitted his insides properly. Indeed, Chopfyt ate so much that little food was left for myself; so, when he proposed, one day, to go out into the world and seek adventures, I was delighted to be rid of him. I even made him a tin arm to take the place of the missing one, and that pleased him very much, so that we parted good friends.”

“What became of Chopfyt after that?” the Scarecrow inquired.

“I never heard. He started off toward the east, into the plains of the Munchkin Country, and that was the last I ever saw of him.”

“It seems to me,” said the Tin Woodman reflectively, “that you did wrong in making a man out of our cast-off parts. It is evident that Chopfyt could, with justice, claim relationship with both of us.”

“Don't worry about that,” advised Ku-Klip cheerfully; “it is not likely that you will ever meet the fellow. And, if you should meet him, he doesn't know who he is made of, for I never told him the secret of his manufacture. Indeed, you are the only ones who know of it, and you may keep the secret to yourselves, if you wish to.”

“Never mind Chopfyt,” said the Scarecrow. “Our business now is to find poor Nimmie Amee and let her choose her tin husband. To do that, it seems, from the information Ku-Klip has given us, we must travel to Mount Munch.”

“If that's the programme, let us start at once,” suggested Woot.

So they all went outside, where they found Polychrome dancing about among the trees and talking with the birds and laughing as merrily as if she had not lost her Rainbow and so been separated from all her fairy sisters.

They told her they were going to Mount Munch, and she replied:

“Very well; I am as likely to find my Rainbow there as here, and any other place is as likely as there. It all depends on the weather. Do you think it looks like rain?”

They shook their heads, and Polychrome laughed again and danced on after them when they resumed their journey.