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IMAGINATION OVER KNOWLEDGE

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The Tin Woodman Of Oz: The Curtain Falls (24/24)

Well, the rest of the story is quickly told, for the return journey of our adventurers was without any important incident. The Scarecrow was so afraid of meeting the Hip-po-gy-raf, and having his straw eaten again, that he urged his comrades to select another route to the Emerald City, and they willingly consented, so that the Invisible Country was wholly avoided.

Of course, when they reached the Emerald City their first duty was to visit Ozma's palace, where they were royally entertained. The Tin Soldier and Woot the Wanderer were welcomed as warmly as any strangers might be who had been the traveling companions of Ozma's dear old friends, the Scarecrow and the Tin Woodman.

At the banquet table that evening they related the manner in which they had discovered Nimmie Amee, and told how they had found her happily married to Chopfyt, whose relationship to Nick Chopper and Captain Fyter was so bewildering that they asked Ozma's advice what to do about it.

"You need not consider Chopfyt at all," replied the beautiful girl Ruler of Oz. "If Nimmie Amee is content

with that misfit man for a husband, we have not even just cause to blame Ku-Klip for gluing him together."

"I think it was a very good idea," added little Dorothy, "for if Ku-Klip hadn't used up your cast-off parts, they would have been wasted. It's wicked to be wasteful, isn't it?"

"Well, anyhow," said Woot the Wanderer,

"Chopfyt, being kept a prisoner by his wife, is too far away from anyone to bother either of you tin men in any way. If you hadn't gone where he is and discovered him, you would never have worried about him."

"What do you care, anyhow," Betsy Bobbin asked the Tin Woodman, "so long as Nimmie Amee is satisfied?"

"And just to think," remarked Tiny Trot, "that any girl would rather live with a mixture like Chopfyt, on far-away Mount Munch, than to be the Empress of the Winkies!"

"It is her own choice," said the Tin Woodman contentedly; "and, after all, I'm not sure the Winkies would care to have an Empress."

It puzzled Ozma, for a time, to decide what to do with the Tin Soldier. If he went with the Tin Woodman to the Emperor's castle, she felt that the two tin men might not be able to live together in harmony, and moreover the Emperor would not be so distinguished if he had a double constantly beside him. So she asked Captain Fyter if he was willing to serve her as a soldier, and he promptly declared that nothing would please him more. After he had been in her service for some time, Ozma sent him into the Gillikin Country, with instructions to

keep order among the wild people who inhabit some parts of that unknown country of Oz.

As for Woot, being a Wanderer by profession, he was allowed to wander wherever he desired, and Ozma promised to keep watch over his future journeys and to protect the boy as well as she was able, in case he ever got into more trouble.

All this having been happily arranged, the Tin Woodman returned to his tin castle, and his chosen comrade, the Scarecrow, accompanied him on the way. The two friends were sure to pass many pleasant hours together in talking over their recent adventures, for as they neither ate nor slept they found their greatest amusement in conversation.

