

This story is brought to you by Ririro.com for free. Our mission is to give all children in the world free access to a variety of stories. The stories can be read, downloaded and printed online and cover a wide range of topics, including animals, fantasy, science, history, diverse cultures and much more.

Support our mission by sharing our website. We wish you a lot of fun reading!



# Ririro

IMAGINATION OVER KNOWLEDGE

Ririro

# The Tin Woodman Of Oz: The Heart of the Tin Woodman (2/24)

The Emperor of the Winkies paused in his story to reach for an oil-can, with which he carefully oiled the joints in his tin throat, for his voice had begun to squeak a little. Woot the Wanderer, having satisfied his hunger, watched this oiling process with much curiosity, but begged the Tin Man to go on with his tale.

"The Witch with the Silver Shoes hated me for having defied her," resumed the Emperor, his voice now sounding clear as a bell, "and she insisted that Nimmie Amee should never marry me. Therefore she made the enchanted axe cut off my other arm, and the tinsmith also replaced that member with tin, including these finely-jointed hands that you see me using. But, alas! after that, the axe, still enchanted by the cruel Witch, cut my body in two, so that I fell to the ground. Then the Witch, who was watching from a near-by bush, rushed up and seized the axe and chopped my body into several small pieces, after which, thinking that at last she had destroyed me, she ran away laughing in wicked glee.

"But Nimmie Amee found me. She picked up my arms and legs and head, and made a bundle of them and

carried them to the tinsmith, who set to work and made me a fine body of pure tin. When he had joined the arms and legs to the body, and set my head in the tin collar, I was a much better man than ever, for my body could not ache or pain me, and I was so beautiful and bright that I had no need of clothing. Clothing is always a nuisance, because it soils and tears and has to be replaced; but my tin body only needs to be oiled and polished.

"Nimmie Amee still declared she would marry me, as she still loved me in spite of the Witch's evil deeds. The girl declared I would make the brightest husband in all the world, which was quite true. However, the Wicked Witch was not yet defeated. When I returned to my work the axe slipped and cut off my head,



which was the only meat part of me then remaining. Moreover, the old woman grabbed up my severed head and carried it away with her and hid it. But Nimmie Amee came into the forest and found me wandering around helplessly, because I could not see where to go, and she led me to my friend the tinsmith. The faithful fellow at once set to work to make me a tin head, and he had just completed it when Nimmie Amee came running up with my old head, which she had stolen from the Witch. But, on reflection, I considered the tin head

far superior to the meat one—I am wearing it yet, so you can see its beauty and grace of outline—and the girl agreed with me that a man all made of tin was far more perfect than one formed of different materials. The tinsmith was as proud of his workmanship as I was, and for three whole days, all admired me and praised my beauty.

"Being now completely formed of tin, I had no more fear of the Wicked Witch, for she was powerless to injure me. Nimmie Amee said we must be married at once, for then she could come to my cottage and live with me and keep me bright and sparkling.

"'I am sure, my dear Nick,' said the brave and beautiful girl—my name was then Nick Chopper, you should be told—'that you will make the best husband any girl could have. I shall not be obliged to cook for you, for now you do not eat; I shall not have to make your bed, for tin does not tire or require sleep; when we go to a dance, you will not get weary before the music stops and say you want to go home. All day long, while you are chopping wood in the forest, I shall be able to amuse myself in my own way—a privilege few wives enjoy. There is no temper in your new head, so you will not get angry with me. Finally, I shall take pride in being the wife of the only live Tin Woodman in all the world!' Which shows that Nimmie Amee was as wise as she was brave and beautiful."

"I think she was a very nice girl," said Woot the Wanderer. "But, tell me, please, why were you not killed when you were chopped to pieces?"

"In the Land of Oz," replied the Emperor, "no one can ever be killed. A man with a wooden leg or a tin leg is still the same man; and, as I lost parts of my meat body by degrees, I always remained the same person as in the beginning, even though in the end I was all tin and no meat."

"I see," said the boy, thoughtfully. "And did you marry Nimmie Amee?"

"No," answered the Tin Woodman, "I did not. She said she still loved me, but I found that I no longer loved her. My tin body contained no heart, and without a heart no one can love. So the Wicked Witch conquered in the end, and when I left the Munchkin Country of Oz, the poor girl was still the slave of the Witch and had to do her bidding day and night."

"Where did you go?" asked Woot.

"Well, I first started out to find a heart, so I could love Nimmie Amee again; but hearts are more scarce than one would think. One day, in a big forest that was strange to me, my joints suddenly became rusted, because I had forgotten to oil them. There I stood, unable to move hand or foot. And there I continued to stand—while days came and went—until Dorothy and the Scarecrow came along and rescued me. They oiled my joints and set me free, and I've taken good care never to rust again."

"Who was this Dorothy?" questioned the Wanderer.

"A little girl who happened to be in a house when it was carried by a cyclone all the way from Kansas to the Land of Oz. When the house fell, in the Munchkin

Country, it fortunately landed on the Wicked Witch and smashed her flat. It was a big house, and I think the Witch is under it yet."

"No," said the Scarecrow, correcting him, "Dorothy says the Witch turned to dust, and the wind scattered the dust in every direction."

"Well," continued the Tin Woodman, "after meeting the Scarecrow and Dorothy, I went with them to the Emerald City, where the Wizard of Oz gave me a heart. But the Wizard's stock of hearts was low, and he gave me a Kind Heart instead of a Loving Heart, so that I could not love Nimmie Amee any more than I did when I was heartless."

"Couldn't the Wizard give you a heart that was both Kind and Loving?" asked the boy.

"No; that was what I asked for, but he said he was so short on hearts, just then, that there was but one in stock, and I could take that or none at all. So I accepted it, and I must say that for its kind it is a very good heart indeed."

"It seems to me," said Woot, musingly, "that the Wizard fooled you. It can't be a very Kind Heart, you know."

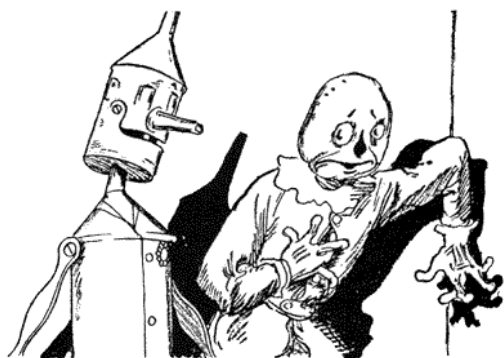
"Why not?" demanded the Emperor.

"Because it was unkind of you to desert the girl who loved you, and who had been faithful and true to you when you were in trouble. Had the heart the Wizard gave you been a Kind Heart, you would have gone back home and made the beautiful Munchkin girl your wife, and then brought her here to be an Empress and live in your splendid tin castle."

The Tin Woodman was so surprised at this frank speech that for a time he did nothing but stare hard at the boy Wanderer. But the Scarecrow wagged his stuffed head and said in a positive tone:

"This boy is right. I've often wondered, myself, why you didn't go back and find that poor Munchkin girl."

Then the Tin Woodman stared hard at his friend the Scarecrow. But finally he said in a serious tone of voice: "I must admit that never before have I thought of such a thing as finding Nimmie Amee and making her Empress of the Winkies. But it is surely not too late, even now, to do this, for the girl must still be living in the Munchkin Country. And, since this strange Wanderer has reminded me of Nimmie Amee, I believe it is my duty to set out and find her. Surely it is not the girl's fault that I no longer love her, and so, if I can make her happy, it is proper that I should do so, and in this way reward her for her faithfulness."



"Quite right, my friend!" agreed the Scarecrow.

"Will you accompany me on this errand?" asked the Tin Emperor.

"Of course," said the Scarecrow.

"And will you take me along?" pleaded Woot the Wanderer in an eager voice.

"To be sure," said the Tin Woodman, "if you care to join our party. It was you who first told me it was my duty

to find and marry Nimmie Amee, and I'd like you to know that Nick Chopper, the Tin Emperor of the Winkies, is a man who never shirks his duty, once it is pointed out to him."

"It ought to be a pleasure, as well as a duty, if the girl is so beautiful," said Woot, well pleased with the idea of the adventure.

"Beautiful things may be admired, if not loved," asserted the Tin Man. "Flowers are beautiful, for instance, but we are not inclined to marry them. Duty, on the contrary, is a bugle call to action, whether you are inclined to act, or not. In this case, I obey the bugle call of duty."

"When shall we start?" inquired the Scarecrow, who was always glad to embark upon a new adventure. "I don't hear any bugle, but when do we go?"

"As soon as we can get ready," answered the Emperor. "I'll call my servants at once and order them to make preparations for our journey."