

## **CHAPTER 7- THE SCARECROW IS HAILED AS EMPEROR!**

Leaning forward on the great throne, the Scarecrow waited impatiently for the ancient gentleman to speak. The gray-skinned courtiers were eyeing him expectantly, and just as the suspense became almost unendurable, the old man threw up his arms and cried sharply:

"The prophecy of the magic beanstalk has been fulfilled. In this radiant and sublime Scarecrowcus, the spirit of Chang Wang Woe, the mighty, has returned. And I, the Grand Chew Chew of the realm, prostrate myself before this wonderful Scarecrowcus, Emperor of the Silver Islands." So, likewise, did all the company present, and the Scarecrow, taken unawares, flew up several feet and landed in a heap on the steps leading to the throne. He climbed back hurriedly, picking up the fan and parasol that he had plucked from the beanstalk.

"I wish Professor Wogglebug could hear this," said the Scarecrow, settling himself complacently. "But I must watch out, and remember to hold on."

The Grand Chew Chew was the first to rise, and folding his arms, he asked solemnly:

"What are your commands, Ancient and Honorable Scarecrowcus?"

"If you'd just omit the Cus," begged the Scarecrow in an embarrassed voice, "I believe I could think better. Am I in China, or where? Are you Chinamen, or what?"

"We are Silvermen," said the Grand Chew Chew impressively, "and a much older race than our Chinese cousins. They are people of the sun. We are people of the stars. Has your Highness so soon forgotten?"

"I am afraid," said the Scarecrow, rubbing his chin reflectively, "that I have." He gazed slowly around the great throne room. Ozma's palace itself was not more dazzling. The floor of dull silver blocks was covered with rich blue rugs. Furniture, chairs, screens and everything were made of silver inlaid with precious stones. Filigreed silver lanterns hung from the high ceilings, and tall silver vases filled with pink and blue blossoms filled the rooms with their perfume. Blue flags embroidered with silver stars fluttered from the walls and the tips of the pikebearers' spears, and silver seemed to be so plentiful that even shoes were fashioned of it. Faintly through the windows came the sweet tones of a hundred silver chimes, and altogether the Scarecrow was quite dazed by his apparent good fortune. Surely they had

called him Emperor, but how could that be? He turned to address the Grand Chew Chew; then as he saw out of the corner of his eye that the assemblage were making ready to fall upon their faces, he exclaimed in a hoarse whisper:

"May I speak to you alone?" The Grand Chew Chew waved his hand imperiously, and the courtiers with a great crackling of silver brocade backed from the hall.

"Very kind of them to bow, but I wish they wouldn't," sighed the Scarecrow, sinking back on the great throne. "It blows one about so. I declare, if another person falls at my feet, I'll have nervous prostration."

Again he took a long survey of the hall, then turned to the Grand Chew Chew. "Would you mind," he asked simply, "telling me again who I am and how?"

"Who and how? Who--You are, illustrious Sir, the Emperor Chang Wang Woe, or to be more exact, his spirit!"

"I have always been a spirited person," observed the Scarecrow dubiously, "but never a spirit without a person. I must insist on being a person."

"How?" the Grand Chew Chew proceeded without noticing the Scarecrow's remarks. "Fifty years ago--after your Extreme Highness had defeated in battle the King of the Golden Islands--a magician entered the realm. This magician, in the employ of this wicked king, entered a room in the palace where your Highness lay sleeping and by an act of necromancy changed you to a crocus!"

"Ouch!" exclaimed the Scarecrow, shuddering involuntarily.

"And had it not been for the Empress, your faithful wife, you would have been lost forever to the Empire."

"Wife?" gasped the Scarecrow faintly. "Have I a wife?"

"If your Highness will permit me to finish," begged the Grand Chew Chew with great dignity. The Scarecrow nodded. "Your wife, Tsing Tsing, the beautiful, took the crocus, which was fading rapidly, and planted it in a silver bowl in the center of this very hall and for three days kept it fresh with her tears. Waking on the third morning, the Empress was amazed to see in place of the crocus a giant bean pole that extended to the roof of the palace and disappeared among the clouds."

"Ah!" murmured the Scarecrow, looking up, "My family tree!"

"Beside the bean pole lay a crumpled parchment." The Grand Chew Chew felt in the sleeve of his kimono and brought out a bit of crumpled silver paper, and adjusting his horn spectacles, read slowly.

"Into the first being who touches this magic pole--on the other side of the world--the spirit of Emperor Chang Wang Woe will enter. And fifty years from this day, he will return--to save his people."

The Grand Chew Chew took off his specs and folded up the paper. "The day has come! You have come down the bean pole, and are undoubtedly that being who has gone from Emperor to crocus to Scarecrowcus. I have ruled the Islands these fifty years; have seen to the education of your sons and grandsons. And now, gracious and exalted Master, as I am an old man I ask you to relieve me from the cares of state."

"Sons! Grandsons!" choked the Scarecrow, beginning to feel very much alarmed indeed. "How old am I?"

"Your Highness," said the Grand Chew Chew with a deep salaam, "is as old as I. In other words, you are in the ripe and glorious eighty-fifth year of your Majesty's illustrious and useful age."

"Eighty five!" gasped the Scarecrow, staring in dismay at the gray, wrinkled face of the old Silverman. "Now see here, Chew Chew, are you sure of that?"

"Quite sure, Immortal and Honored Master!"

The Scarecrow could not help but be convinced of the truth of the Grand Chew Chew's story. The pole in the Munchkin farmer's cornfield was none other than the magic beanstalk, and he, thrust on the pole by the farmer to scare away the crows, had received the spirit of the Emperor Chang Wang Woe. "Which accounts for my cleverness," he thought gloomily. Now, surely he should have been pleased, for he had come in search of a family, but the acquisition of an empire, sons and grandsons, and old age, all in a trice, fairly took his breath away.

"Does the prophecy say anything about restoring my imperial person?" he asked anxiously, for the thought of looking like Chew Chew was not a cheerful one.

"Alas, no!" sighed the Grand Chew Chew sorrowfully. "But we have very clever wizards on the Island, and I shall set them at work on the problem at once."

"Now don't be in such a rush," begged the Scarecrow, secretly determined to lock up the wizards at the first opportunity. "I'm rather fond of this shape. You see, it requires no food and never grows tired--or old!"

"The royal robes will in a measure conceal it," murmured the Grand Chew Chew politely, and clapped his hands. A little servitor bounced into the hall.

"A royal robe, Quick Silver, for his Radiant Highness," snapped the Grand Chew Chew. In a moment Quick Silver had returned with a magnificent purple satin robe embroidered in silver threads and heavy with jewels, and a hat of silver cloth with upturned brim. The Scarecrow wrapped himself in the purple robe, took off his old Munchkin hat, and substituted the Imperial headpiece.

"How do I look, Chew?" he asked anxiously.

"Quite like your old Imperial Self, except--" The old Prime Minister ran unsteadily out of the room. There was a muffled scream from the hall, and the next instant he returned with a long, shiny, silver queue which he had evidently clipped from the head of one of the servants. Removing the Scarecrow's hat, he pinned the queue to the back, set it on the Scarecrow's head, and stood regarding him with great satisfaction. "Ah, if the Empress could only see you!" he murmured rapturously.

"Where--where is she?" asked the Scarecrow, looking around nervously. His long, care-free life in Oz had somewhat unfitted him, he reflected, for family life.

"Alas!" sighed the Grand Chew Chew, wiping his eyes on the sleeve of his kimono, "She has returned to her silver ancestors."

"Then show me her picture," commanded the Scarecrow, visibly affected. The Grand Chew Chew stepped to a side wall, and pulling on a silken cord, disclosed the picture of a large, gray lady with curiously small eyes and a curiously large nose.

"Is she not beautiful?" asked the Grand Chew Chew, bowing his head.

"Beautiful--er--er, beautiful!" gulped the Scarecrow. He thought of lovely little Ozma and dear little Dorothy, and all at once felt terribly upset and homesick. He had no recollection of the Silver Island or his life here whatever. Who was he, anyway--the Scarecrow of Oz or Emperor Chang Wang Woe? He couldn't be both.

"Ah!" whispered the Grand Chew Chew, seeing his agitation. "You remember her?" The Scarecrow shook his head, with an inward shudder.

"Now show me myself, Chew," he asked curiously. Pulling the cord of a portrait beside the Empress, Chew Chew revealed the picture of Chang Wang Woe as he had been fifty years ago. His face was bland and jolly, and to be perfectly truthful, quite like the Scarecrow's in shape and expression. "I am beside myself," murmured the Scarecrow dazedly--which in truth he was.

"You were--er--are a very royal and handsome person," stammered the Grand ChewChew.

The Scarecrow, stepping off the throne to examine himself more closely, dropped the little fan and parasol. He had really not had time to examine them since they snapped off the beanstalk, and now, looking at them carefully, he found them extremely pretty.

"Dorothy will like these," thought the Scarecrow, slipping them into a large inside pocket of his robe. Already, in the back of his head, was a queer notion that he would at some time or other return to Oz. He started to give the Grand Chew Chew a spirited description of that wonderful country, but the ancient gentleman yawned and, waving his hands toward the door, interrupted him with:

"Would not your Supreme Highness care to inspect your present dominions?"

"I suppose I may as well!" With a deep sigh, the Scarecrow took the Grand Chew Chew's arm and, holding up his royal kimono (which was rather long) with the other hand, walked unsteadily down the great salon. They were about to pass into the garden when a little fat Silverman slid around the door, a huge silver drumstick upraised in his right hand and a great drum hung about his neck.

The drummer beamed on the Scarecrow.

Chang Wang Woe, the Beautiful,      The Beautiful has come!  
Sublime and silver Scarecrow,      Let sound the royal drum!

chanted the little man in a high, thin voice, and started to bring the drumstick down upon the huge head of his noisy instrument.

"No you don't!" cried the Scarecrow, leaping forward and catching his arm.

"I positively forbid it!"

"Then I shall have no work!" screamed the drummer, falling on his face. "Ah, Gracious Master, don't you remember me?"

"Yes," said the Scarecrow kindly, "who are you?"

"Oh, don't you remember little Happy Toko?" wheezed the little man, the tears rolling down his cheeks. "I was only a boy, but you used to be fond of me."

"Why, of course, my dear Tappy," said the Scarecrow, not liking to hurt the little fellow's feelings. "But why do you beat the drum?"

"It is customary to sound the drum at the approach of your Royal Highness," put in the Grand Chew Chew importantly.

"Was customary," said the Scarecrow firmly. "My dear Tappy Oko, never sound it in my presence again; it is too upsetting." Which was true enough, for one blow of the drum sent the flimsy Scarecrow flying into the air.

"You're dismissed, Happy," snapped the Grand Chew Chew. At this, the little Silver Islander began weeping and roaring with distress.

"Stop! What else can you do besides beat a drum?" asked the Scarecrow kindly.

"I can sing, stand on my head, and tell jokes," sniffed Happy Toko, shuffling from one foot to the other.

"Very good," said the Scarecrow. "You are henceforth Imperial Punster to my Person. Come along, we're going to look over the Island."

The Grand Chew Chew frowned so terribly that Happy Toko's knees shook with terror.

"It is not fitting for a slave to accompany the Grand Chew Chew and the Emperor," he hissed angrily.

The Scarecrow looked surprised, for the Kingdom of Oz is quite democratic, and no one is considered better than another. But seeing this was not the time to argue, he winked broadly behind the Grand Chew Chew's back.

"I'll see you again, Tappy my boy," he called genially, and passed out into the garden, where a magnificent silver palanquin, surrounded by pikemen and shieldbearers, awaited him.