

The Flight of the Fugitives

Tip reflected.

"It's a hard thing, to be a marble statue," he thought, rebelliously, "and I'm not going to stand it. For years I've been a bother to her, she says; so she's going to get rid of me. Well, there's an easier way than to become a statue. No boy could have any fun forever standing in the middle of a flower garden! I'll run away, that's what I'll do--and I may as well go before she makes me drink that nasty stuff in the kettle." He waited until the snores of the old witch announced she was fast asleep, and then he arose softly and went to the cupboard to find something to eat.

"No use starting on a journey without food," he decided, searching upon the narrow shelves.

He found some crusts of bread; but he had to look into Mombi's basket to find the cheese she had brought from the village. While turning over the contents of the basket he came upon the pepper-box which contained the "Powder of Life."

"I may as well take this with me," he thought, "or Mombi'll be using it to make more mischief with." So he put the box in his pocket, together with the bread and cheese.

Then he cautiously left the house and latched the door behind him. Outside both moon and stars shone brightly, and the night seemed peaceful and inviting after the close and ill-smelling kitchen.

"I'll be glad to get away," said Tip, softly; "for I never did like that old woman. I wonder how I ever came to live with her."

He was walking slowly toward the road when a thought made him pause.

"I don't like to leave Jack Pumpkinhead to the tender mercies of old Mombi," he muttered. "And Jack belongs to me, for I made him even if the old witch did bring him to life."

He retraced his steps to the cow-stable and opened the door of the stall where the pumpkin-headed man had been left.

Jack was standing in the middle of the stall, and by the moonlight Tip could see he was smiling just as jovially as ever.

"Come on!" said the boy, beckoning.

"Where to?" asked Jack.

"You'll know as soon as I do," answered Tip, smiling sympathetically into the pumpkin face.

"All we've got to do now is to tramp."

"Very well," returned Jack, and walked awkwardly out of the stable and into the moonlight.

Tip turned toward the road and the man followed him. Jack walked with a sort of limp, and occasionally one of the joints of his legs would turn backward, instead of frontwise, almost causing him to tumble. But the Pumpkinhead was quick to notice this, and began to take more pains to step carefully; so that he met with few accidents.

Tip led him along the path without stopping an instant. They could not go very fast, but they walked steadily; and by the time the moon sank away and the sun peeped over the hills they had travelled so great a distance that the boy had no reason to fear pursuit from the old witch. Moreover, he had turned first into one path, and then into another, so that should anyone follow them it would prove very difficult to guess which way they had gone, or where to seek them.

Fairly satisfied that he had escaped--for a time, at least--being turned into a marble statue, the boy stopped his companion and seated himself upon a rock by the roadside.

"Let's have some breakfast," he said.

Jack Pumpkinhead watched Tip curiously, but refused to join in the repast.

"I don't seem to be made the same way you are," he said.

"I know you are not," returned Tip; "for I made you."

"Oh! Did you?" asked Jack.

"Certainly. And put you together. And carved your eyes and nose and ears and mouth," said Tip proudly. "And dressed you."

Jack looked at his body and limbs critically.

"It strikes me you made a very good job of it," he remarked.

"Just so-so," replied Tip, modestly; for he began to see certain defects in the construction of his man. "If I'd known we were going to travel together I might have been a little more particular."

"Why, then," said the Pumpkinhead, in a tone that expressed surprise, "you must be my creator my parent my father!"

"Or your inventor," replied the boy with a laugh. "Yes, my son; I really believe I am!"

"Then I owe you obedience," continued the man, "and you owe me--support."

"That's it, exactly", declared Tip, jumping up. "So let us be off."

"Where are we going?" asked Jack, when they had resumed their journey.

"I'm not exactly sure," said the boy; "but I believe we are headed South, and that will bring us, sooner or later, to the Emerald City."

"What city is that?" enquired the Pumpkinhead.

"Why, it's the center of the Land of Oz, and the biggest town in all the country. I've never been there, myself, but I've heard all about its history. It was built by a mighty and wonderful Wizard named Oz, and everything there is of a green color--just as everything in this Country of the Gillikins is of a purple color."

"Is everything here purple?" asked Jack.

"Of course it is. Can't you see?" returned the boy.

"I believe I must be color-blind," said the Pumpkinhead, after staring about him.

"Well, the grass is purple, and the trees are purple, and the houses and fences are purple," explained Tip. "Even the mud in the roads is purple. But in the Emerald City everything is green that is purple here. And in the Country of the Munchkins, over at the East, everything is blue; and in the South country of the Quadlings everything is red; and in the West country of

the Winkies, where the Tin Woodman rules, everything is yellow."

"Oh!" said Jack. Then, after a pause, he asked: "Did you say a Tin Woodman rules the Winkies?"

"Yes; he was one of those who helped Dorothy to destroy the Wicked Witch of the West, and the Winkies were so grateful that they invited him to become their ruler,--just as the people of the Emerald City invited the Scarecrow to rule them."

"Dear me!" said Jack. "I'm getting confused with all this history. Who is the Scarecrow?"

"Another friend of Dorothy's," replied Tip.

"And who is Dorothy?"

"She was a girl that came here from Kansas, a place in the big, outside World. She got blown to the Land of Oz by a cyclone, and while she was here the Scarecrow and the Tin Woodman accompanied her on her travels."

"And where is she now?" inquired the Pumpkinhead.

"Glinda the Good, who rules the Quadlings, sent her home again," said the boy.

"Oh. And what became of the Scarecrow?"

"I told you. He rules the Emerald City," answered Tip.

"I thought you said it was ruled by a wonderful Wizard," objected Jack, seeming more and more confused.

"Well, so I did. Now, pay attention, and I'll explain it," said Tip, speaking slowly and looking the smiling Pumpkinhead squarely in the eye. "Dorothy went to the Emerald City to ask the Wizard to send her back to Kansas; and the Scarecrow and the Tin Woodman went with her. But the Wizard couldn't send her back, because he wasn't so much of a Wizard as he might have been. And then they got angry at the Wizard, and threatened to expose him; so the Wizard made a big balloon and escaped in it, and no one has ever seen him since."

"Now, that is very interesting history," said Jack, well pleased; "and I understand it perfectly all but the explanation."

"I'm glad you do," responded Tip. "After the Wizard was gone, the people of the Emerald City made His Majesty, the Scarecrow, their King; and I have heard that he became a very popular ruler."

"Are we going to see this queer King?" asked Jack, with interest.

"I think we may as well," replied the boy; "unless you have something better

to do."

"Oh, no, dear father," said the Pumpkinhead. "I am quite willing to go wherever you please."