

The Rescue of the Tin Woodman

by **L. Frank Baum** *from The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*

Dorothy, a Kansas girl, is carried by a tornado to the distant land of Oz. Dorothy wants to go back home. She travels to the Emerald City to ask the Wizard of Oz to help her. Along the way, she meets a tin woodman, who tells his story in this passage.

“I was born the son of a woodman who chopped down trees in the forest and sold the wood for a living. When I grew up, I too became a woodchopper, and after my father died I took care of my old mother as long as she lived. Then I made up my mind that instead of living alone I would marry, so that I might not become lonely.

“There was one of the Munchkin girls who was so beautiful that I soon grew to love her with all my heart. She promised to marry me as soon as I could earn enough money to build a better house for her; so I set to work harder than ever. But the girl lived with an old woman who did not want her to marry anyone, for she was so lazy she wished the girl to remain with her and do the cooking and the housework. So the old woman went to the Wicked Witch of the East, and promised her two sheep and a cow if she would prevent the marriage. Thereupon the Wicked Witch enchanted my axe, and when I was chopping away one day, the axe slipped all at once and cut off my left leg.

“This at first seemed a great misfortune, for I knew a one-legged man could not do very well as a wood-chopper. So I went to a tinsmith and had him make me a new leg out of tin. The leg worked very well, once I was used to it. But my action angered the Wicked Witch of the East. When I began chopping again, my axe slipped and cut off my right leg. Again I went to the tinsmith, and again he made me a leg out of tin. After this the enchanted axe cut off my arms, one after the other; but, nothing daunted, I had them replaced with tin ones. The Wicked Witch then made the axe slip and cut off my head, and at first I thought that was the end of me. But the tinsmith made me a new head out of tin.

“I thought I had beaten the Wicked Witch then; but I little knew how cruel my enemy could be. She thought of a new way to kill my love for the beautiful Munchkin maiden, and made my axe slip again, so that it cut right through my body, splitting me into two halves. Once more the tinsmith came to my help and made me a body of tin. But, alas! I had now no heart, so that I lost all my love for the Munchkin girl, and did not care whether I married her or not.

“My body shone so brightly in the sun that I felt very proud of it and it did not matter now if my axe slipped, for it could not cut me. There was only one danger—that my joints would rust; but I kept an oil-can in my cottage and took care to oil myself whenever I needed it. However, there came a day when I forgot to do this, and, being caught in a rainstorm, my joints rusted. I was left to stand in the woods until you came to help me. It was a terrible thing to undergo, but during the year I stood there I had time to think that the

greatest loss I had known was the loss of my heart. While I was in love I was the happiest man on earth; but no one can love who has not a heart, and so I am resolved to ask Oz to give me one. If he does, I will go back to the Munchkin maiden and marry her.”

Questions

1. Why did the old woman go to the Wicked Witch of the East?
2. What was the one danger the Tin Woodman faced after his body was tin?
3. What did the Tin Woodman lose that made him not care about marrying the Munchkin girl?
4. What does the Tin Woodman want from the Wizard of Oz?

Vocabulary List

Each of the vocabulary words below are used in the reading passage. As you read the passage, pay attention to context clues that suggest the word's meaning.

1. woodman
2. remain
3. enchanted
4. misfortune
5. tinsmith
6. daunted
7. maiden
8. joints
9. undergo
10. resolved

Context Clues

Using context clues from the sentences in the passage, underline the correct meaning of the word in boldface.

1) "I was born the son of a **woodman** who chopped down trees in the forest"

- a. scarecrow b. forester; woodcutter c. farmer or rancher d. eastern person

2) "she wished the girl to **remain** with her and do the cooking and the housework"

- a. work b. talk or discuss c. leave; depart d. stay

3) "Thereupon the Wicked Witch **enchanted** my axe"

- a. traded; exchanged b. stole or took c. cast a spell; bewitched d. admired

4) "This at first seemed a great **misfortune**, for I knew a one-legged man could not do very well as a wood-chopper."

- a. mistake b. hardship; bad luck c. idea d. opportunity or chance

5) "I went to a **tinsmith** and had him make me a new leg out of tin"

- a. doctor b. carpenter c. house builder d. one who works with light metal; tinner

6) "but, nothing **daunted**, I had them replaced with tin ones"

a. bothered; dismayed b. forgotten c. cheaper d. cracked or bent

7) "She thought of a new way to kill my love for the beautiful Munchkin **maiden**"

a. servant b. young woman c. homeland; territory d. neighbor

8) "There was only one danger—that my **joints** would rust"

a. eyeballs b. roof c. parts of the body where two bones meet; hinge d. restaurant

9) "It was a terrible thing to **undergo**"

a. tunnel or hole b. leave; depart c. experience; live through d. explain

10) "no one can love who has not a heart, and so I am **resolved** to ask Oz to give me one"

a. determined b. shy c. thinking about d. afraid