

∴ The Golem of Prague ∴



Rabbi Lion, of the (1) _____ /'eɪntʃənt/ city of Prague, sat in his study in the Ghetto. Through the window he could see the River Moldau with the narrow streets of the Jewish quarter clustered around the (2) _____ /'semətri/, which still stands to-day, and where is to be seen this famous plan's tomb. (3) _____ /bɪ'jɒnd/ the Ghetto rose the towers and spires of the city. He had a problem on his mind. He was unable to find a servant, even one to attend the fire on the (4) _____ /'sæbəθ/ for him.

The truth was that the (5) _____ /'pi:pl/ were a little afraid of the rabbi. He was a very learned man, wise and studious, and a scientist; and because he did wonderful things people (6) _____ /kɔ:ld/ him a magician. His experiments in chemistry frightened them. Late at nights they saw (7) _____ /'lɪtl/ spurts of blue and red flame shine from his window, and they said that demons and witches came at his beck and call. So (8) _____ /'nəʊbədi/ would enter his service.

"If, as they declare, I am truly a (9) _____ /mə'dʒɪʃən/, " he said to himself, "why should I not make for myself a servant, one that will tend the fire for me on the Sabbath?"

He set to work on his novel (10) _____ /aɪ'dɪə/ and in a few weeks had completed his mechanical creature, a woman. She looked like a big, strong, laboring woman, and the rabbi was greatly (11) _____ /pli:zd/ with his handiwork.

"Now to (12) _____ /ɪn'daʊ/ it with life," he said.

Carefully, in the silence of his mysterious study at (13) _____ /'mɪdnɑ:t/, he wrote out the Unpronounceable Sacred Name of God on a piece of parchment. Then he rolled it up and (14) _____ /plɛɪst/ it in the mouth of the creature.

Immediately it sprang up and began to (15) _____ /mu:v/ like a living thing. It rolled its eyes, waved its arms, and nearly walked through the window. In alarm, Rabbi Lion (16) _____ /snætʃt/ the parchment from its mouth and the creature fell helpless to the floor.

"I must be careful," said the rabbi. "It is a wonderful (17) _____ /mə'ʃi:n/ with its many springs and screws and levers, and will be most useful to me as soon as I (18) _____ /lɜ:n/ to control it properly."

All the people marveled when they saw the rabbi's machine-woman running (19) _____ /'erəndz/ and doing many duties, controlled only by his thoughts. She could do (20) _____ /'evriθɪŋ/ but speak, and Rabbi Lion discovered that he must take the Name from her mouth before he went to sleep. Otherwise, she might do (21) _____ /'mɪstʃɪf/.

One cold Sabbath afternoon, the rabbi was (22) _____ /pri:tʃɪŋ/ in the synagogue and the little children stood outside his house looking at the machine-woman seated by the (23) _____ /'wɪndəʊ/. When they rolled their eyes she did too, and at last they shouted: "Come and play with us."

She promptly jumped through the window and (24) _____ /stʊd/ among the boys and girls.

"We are cold," said one. "Canst thou make a fire for us?"

The creature was made to obey orders, so she at once collected sticks and lit a fire in the street. Then, with the children, she danced round the blaze in great glee. She piled on all the (25) _____ /stɪks/ and old barrels she could find, and soon the fire spread and caught a house. The children ran away in fear while the fire blazed so (26) _____ /'fjuəriəsli/ that the whole town became alarmed. Before the flames could be (27) _____ /ɪk'stɪŋgwiʃd/, a number of houses had been burned down and much damage done. The creature could not be found, and only when the parchment with the Name, which could not burn, was discovered amid the ashes, was it known that she had been destroyed in the conflagration.

The Council of the city was indignant when it learned of the (28) _____ /streɪndʒ/ occurrence, and Rabbi Lion was summoned to appear before King Rudolf.

"What is this I hear," (29) _____ /ɑ:skt/ his majesty. "Is it not a sin to make a living creature?"

"It had no life but that which the Sacred Name gave it," replied the rabbi.

"I understand it not," said the (30) _____ /kiŋ/. "Thou wilt be imprisoned and must make another creature, so that I may see it for myself. If it is as thou sayest, thy life shall be spared. If not-if, in truth, thou (31) _____ /prə'feɪnɪst/ God's sacred law and makest a living thing, thou shalt die and all thy people shall be expelled from this city."

Rabbi Lion at once set to work, and made a man, much (32) _____ /bɪgər/ than the woman that had been burned.

"As your majesty sees," said the rabbi, when his task was (33) _____ /kəm'pli:tɪd/, "it is but a creature of wood and glue with springs at the joints. Now observe," and he put the Sacred Name in its (34) _____ /maʊθ/.

Slowly the creature rose to its feet and saluted the monarch who was so delighted that he cried: "Give him to me, rabbi."

"That cannot be," said Rabbi Lion, solemnly. "The Sacred Name must not pass from my possession. Otherwise the creature may do great damage again. This time I (35) _____ /ʃæɪ/ take care and will not use the man on the Sabbath."

The king saw the wisdom of this, set the rabbi at liberty and allowed him to take the creature to his house. The Jews looked on in wonderment when they saw the (36) _____ /'kri:tʃər/ walking along the street by the side of Rabbi Lion, but the children ran away in fear, crying: "The bogey-man."

The rabbi exercised caution with his bogey-man this time, and every (37) _____ /'fraɪdeɪ/, just before Sabbath commenced, he took the name from its mouth so as to render it powerless.

It became more wonderful every day, and one (38) _____ /'i:vɪŋ/ it startled the rabbi from a doze by beginning to speak.

"I want to be a soldier," it said, "and fight for the king. I (39) _____ /bɪ'lɒŋ/ to the king. You made me for him."

"Silence," cried Rabbi Lion, and it had to obey. "I like not this," said the rabbi to himself. "This monster must not become my master, or it may destroy me and (40) _____ /pə'hæps/ all the Jews."

He could not help but wonder (41) _____ /'weðər/ the king was right and that it must be a sin to create a man. The creature not only spoke, but grew surly and disobedient, and yet the rabbi hesitated to break it up, for it was most useful to him. It did all his cooking, washing and cleaning, and three servants could not (42) _____ /hæv/ performed the work so neatly and quickly.

One Friday afternoon when the rabbi was (43) _____ /prɪ'peəriŋ/ to go to the synagogue, he heard a loud noise in the street.

"Come quickly," the people (44) _____ /ʃaʊtɪd/ at his door. "Your bogey-man is trying to get into the synagogue."

Rabbi Lion rushed out in a state of alarm. The (45) _____ /'mɒnstər/ had slipped from the house and was battering down the door of the synagogue.

"What art thou doing?" demanded the rabbi, sternly.

"Trying to get into the synagogue to destroy the (46) _____ /skrəʊlz/ of the Holy Law," answered the monster. "Then wilt thou have no power over me, and I shall make a great army of bogey-men who shall fight for the king."

"I will kill thee first," exclaimed Rabbi Lion, and (47) _____ /sprɪŋ/ forward he snatched the parchment with the Name so quickly from the creature's mouth that it collapsed at his feet a mass of (48) _____ /'brəʊkən/ springs and pieces of wood and glue.

For many years afterward these pieces were shown to visitors in the (49) _____ /'ætɪk/ of the synagogue when the story was told of the rabbi's bogey-man.

