

The Tiny Man (apologies to William Carlos Williams)

A while ago, I walked into the kitchen to get some water for the fern in the living room when I knocked over the coffee I had forgotten to drink earlier in the morning. As I bent over to clean up the mess on the floor; I noticed a tiny coffee tinted footprint, less than the size of a small pea. It was human, completely formed. There was another and another all heading toward the old dog flap now used by the cat. I followed on my hands and knees. Pushing open the flap, I came face to face with Tim, our ginger, holding a tiny man in his mouth.

“Ouch, darn cat.” he said. As Tim dropped him on the patio.

“You speak English.” I responded in surprise.

“Well of course Madam, I do live in England.” He pushed back a wisp of greying blond hair from his face.

“How did you get here?” I enquired.

“Your cat, Madam. He is insistent on delivering me to your kitchen where by the way I was almost just now drown by a deluge of coffee.”

“Are you a fairy?” I interjected.

“A fairy Madam? Please do you see any wings?” I shook my head no.

“A gnome perhaps?”

“Madam please, he stood up and dusted himself off. Why do you insult me so? Look at my fine profile.”

I did. My head was now fully outside of the cat flap.

“Well.” He enquired.

He did indeed have a handsome profile; both sides as he turned back and forth. He was about five inches tall with just the smallest pot belly. He wore his hair short and parted on the side. He had a strong straight nose, deep blue eyes and bushy grey eyebrows. His lips were full but not feminine. He was wearing a blue and white stripped button-down shirt, brownish trousers and bright red braces. His feet were bare.

“You are quite handsome, definitely not a gnome.” I declared.

Movement caught my eye and I looked up to Tim’s tail flicking with impatience.

“Perhaps you best come inside. What’s your name?”

“I am me and we are we,” he said.

“How do you do lamwe. I ‘m Elizabeth.” Tim’s tail was bashing the ground with even more vigour. “Perhaps I could give you a lift?” I held out my hand palm up and he climbed on and sat with his feet dangling over my little finger.

We went into the kitchen and I put my hand down on the kitchen table and he climbed off.

“Would you like a cup of tea?”

“Splendid madam Elizabeth”.

I noticed he was staring intently out of the window but I didn't see Tim anywhere.

"I'll be right back." I put the kettle on and then went into the grandchildren's play room and I dug around in the doll's house. "Perfect fit." I said to myself.

I returned to the kitchen with an upholstered arm chair just the right size and beckoned him to sit. Beside it, I placed a small wooden side table. Then I prepared the tea, one cup for me and a tiny cup and saucer and tea pot for him. "Milk?", I asked. Before he could answer, I went back into the play room and picked up the matching milk jug and returned to the kitchen where I filled it and then poured from it into his tea. I also offered him a good-sized biscuit crumb which he accepted.

Once we had settled, I asked "Where do you live?"

He abruptly stood and walked across the table to the window and he looked out. "You mean, where was I living?"

"OK, where were you living and why are you no longer there?"

"Well, you see Madam Elizabeth, so much depends upon that green wheelbarrow," teacup in hand, he pointed outside.

I stood up and looked.

"The one leaning against the barn by the yellow chickens?" I asked.

"Indeed." He answered. "It had been lying abandoned, hiding the entrance to my abode, when somebody carelessly moved it and exposed my front to this giant creature, the one you call Tim. Who, although aware of my presence, has not previously been able to get anywhere near to me and I have been able to come and go at will until today."

After that non-stop, bracingly fast monologue, he returned to his arm chair and settled in nicely.

"I'm afraid that was my fault lamwe. I asked my husband to clean up the orchard and he brought that old wheelbarrow down. I'm so sorry. I will have him return it. "

"No, no need, indeed, Elizabeth. He got up and looked around. Madam, I am in a far far better place."

He picked up the teapot to refill his cup when there was a crashing noise as Tim flew through the cat flap, leapt upon the kitchen table, grabbed lamwe, jumped off and flew out the flap.

We looked for them for days.

One morning, I was in the kitchen peeling apples when I heard the cat flap open. Then, there was a meow. I turned to see lamwe sitting, somewhat astride, on Tim like a mahout, surrounded with a jumbled, tied up assortment of tiny furniture, trunks and bags.

"Madam, we are home".

And thus began a very interesting time for all of us.

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