



TAMAWACA FOLKS

L. FRANK BAUM

Tamawaca Folks - A Summer Comedy

L. Frank Baum
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Tamawaca Folks

Explanative.

The author begs to state that whatever is contained in this modest volume has been written in a spirit of the broadest good-fellowship, and with malice toward none. He has met odd and entertaining people in all quarters of the world and has brought them together in "Tamawaca Folks" merely that he might weave them into his little romance, and with no thought of being in any way personal. Therefore, since these are many and variant types and can have no individuality for that reason, the writer begs his reader not to attempt to fit any of the fictitious characters to living persons, lest your neighbor try to fit one of my masquerade costumes to you - which would be an impertinence I am sure you would not like. The temptation, I admit, is natural, because the people portrayed are all human and even their composites have prototypes in nearly every locality. But desist, I entreat you.

Tamawaca exists, and is as beautiful as I have described it. I chose it as the scene of my story because I once passed an entire summer there and was fascinated by its incomparable charm. The middle West has no spot that can compete with it in loveliness.

Chapter I. The Lawyer.

When Jarrod finally sold out the Crosbys he had a chance to breathe freely for the first time in years. The Crosbys had been big ranch owners and herders, mine owners, timber and mill owners, bankers, brokers, bucketshop manipulators and confirmed bull-dozers and confidence-men. They played the game for big stakes always and won by sheer nerve and audacity.

Jarrold was their lawyer and they kept him in hot water every minute. They had a habit of rounding up other folks' cattle, cutting other people's timber, jumping claims, tapping mines and misbehaving generally. And Jarrod had to straighten out these misdeeds and find a way to keep his clients from behind the bars.

Old man Crosby, who had been shot in the hip in a raid, ran the Bank of Oklahoma, and ran it so crookedly that Jarrod was often in despair. No one would believe a Crosby under oath, while Jarrod was acknowledged by even his enemies to be square as a die and fair as the scales of justice. So his position was extremely difficult. He saved the Crosbys from their misdeeds for years, by dint of hard work and constant diplomacy, and at last, when a thousand penalties confronted them and could not be staved off much longer, the lawyer managed to sell for them their entire holdings

and induced them to retire from business in general and lawlessness in particular.

When it was all over Jarrod went home to Kansas City, nodded to his wife, looked curiously and with some interest at his children, and then sat down in an easy chair and sighed. It was all new and strange to him - this being "at home" - and he wasn't sure at first whether he liked it or not.

Mrs. Jarrod liked it, though, and made much of him, so that gradually his uneasiness wore off and he settled down meekly to the practice of law in general. Four or five hours a day he spent in his office, listening to the unimportant grievances of common folks and striving to keep his nerves from jumping.

He hadn't thought to feather his nest, yet the Crosbys had good-naturedly tossed a lump of money at him and he had accepted it. But a nervous man must keep busy, even when those same nerves operate to keep him cold and quiet as an alternative to dancing and yelling like a madman. So Jarrod "held on to himself" and tried to enjoy his devoted family and the petty details which were all that remained of a business too long neglected to serve those wild Crosbys.

The reaction had set in following his recent months of hard work, and before many days he felt himself both physically and mentally exhausted and knew that unless he deliberately created a diversion his run-down constitution would be likely to involuntarily create one that he wouldn't like.

As fate would have it, on a balmy spring day he met an old friend - a Dr. Brush - who was a prominent and highly respected clergyman. Said the doctor:

"You need a change, Jarrod. Why don't you go to some quiet, pleasant summer resort, and loaf until fall'?"

"Where can I find such a place?" asked Jarrod.

"Why, any of the Lake Michigan resorts are desirable - Tamawaca, Bay View, Charlevoix or Petoskey. I've been to Tamawaca a couple of summers myself, and like it immensely. It isn't so fashionable as Charlevoix and Petoskey, but it is the most beautiful place I have ever seen, bar none."

"What's there?" enquired Jarrod, listlessly.

"Lake Michigan, to begin with; and Tamawaca Pool, which is really a lovely inland lake. You'll find there good fishing and bathing, a noble forest running down to the water's edge, pretty cottages nestled among the trees, lots of ozone, and quiet till you can't rest."

"Eh?"

"I mean quiet so you can rest."

"It sounds promising," said Jarrod. "Guess I'll go. My wife remarked yesterday we ought to escape the summer's heat on the children's account. This idea will please her - and it pleases me. I used to fish when I was a boy. And hunt. How's the hotel, Brush?"

"Bad as possible. Take a cottage. That's the only way to enjoy life."

"How can I get a cottage?"

"Oh, ask Wilder, when you get to Tamawaca. There are always cottages to rent. But stay! you might take Grant's place. He's a St. Louis man, and I understand his cottage is for rent. I'll write and ask him, if you like."

"Do, old fellow. And thank you very much."

He went home and told Mrs. Jarrod, who was delighted with the plan.

"Where did you say it was?" she asked.

"On Lake Michigan, somewhere. I forget the name of the place."

"How do you get there?"

"I didn't enquire."

"And whose cottage are you going to rent?"

"Why, - it belongs to a man in St. Louis. Dr. Brush knows him."

Mrs. Jarrod asked no more questions, but she straightway put on her bonnet and called upon Mrs. Brush.

In an hour she knew all that was necessary about Tamawaca.

The clergyman got a reply, in course of time, from Grant of St. Louis. His cottage was in Wilder's hands to rent. Jarrod must see Wilder about it as soon as he got to Tamawaca. It was all furnished and ready to move into.

"Who is Wilder?" Jarrod asked his friend.

"Wilder! Oh, I forgot you don't know Tamawaca," said Dr. Brush. "Therefore you don't know Wilder. Wilder is Tamawaca."

"I see," returned Jarrod, nodding.

"Oh, no you don't. You think you see, I've no doubt. But there is only one Wilder upon earth, and perhaps that is fortunate. You've been in with those pirate Crosbys for years. Well, Wilder is the Crosby - in other words the pirate - of Tamawaca. See now?"

"He runs things, eh?"

"Yes; for Wilder. A charming fellow, by the way. Looks like a cherub, and acts like - "

"You interest me," said Jarrod, brightening. "I'm glad I'm going to Tamawaca."

A few days later the Jarrods - bag and baggage, parents and children - travelled up to Chicago and landed in the morning at the Auditorium Annex. A little fat man stood before the counter in front of Jarrod and winked saucily at the clerk. His face was moon-shaped and rosy, guiltless of whisker, and bore an expression at once gentle and whimsical.

"Gimme the best room you have," he called out, while scribbling his name on the register.

"Ah, a twenty-dollar suite?" asked the clerk, cheerfully.

"Hear me out!" retorted the little man. "Gimme the best room you have for four dollars a day."

"Oh," said the clerk, his jaw dropping. "Here, front! show the gentleman up to 1906. Any baggage, sir?"

"Just my wife," sighed the little man, with another wink, and a stout lady of ample proportions grabbed his arm and whisked him away. She didn't seem at all offended, but laughed pleasantly and said: "Now, George, behave yourself!"

Jarrold looked at the register. The little fat man had written: "Geo. B. Still, Quincy, III."

The Jarrolds shopped during the day, and bought themselves and the children cool things for summer. In the evening they went down to the river and boarded the big steel steamer that was to carry them to their destination.

Chapter II. Jim.

A whistle blew; the little tug strained at its cable, and snorting and puffing in the supreme struggle it drew the great steamer "Plymouth" away from its dock to begin its journey down the river to the open lake and thence, discarding its tug, across mighty Michigan to Iroquois Bay, Tamawaca, and the quaint city of Kochton.

The passengers thronged both the ample decks to catch the cooling breeze that came as soon as they were in motion, for the day had been especially warm for June. The older folks drew long lines of chairs to the rails, while the young people walked up and down, chattering and gay. To nearly all the voyage meant the beginning of a holiday, and hearts were light and faces eager and expectant.

Jarrood had no sooner located his family in a comfortable corner than he was attracted by a young man who sauntered by.

"Why, Jim, is it you?" he exclaimed, jumping up to hold out a hand in greeting.

The other paused, as if astonished, but then said in a cordial tone:

"You here, Mr. Jarrod?"

He was a tall, athletic looking fellow, with a fine face, a straightforward look in his eyes and a clean-cut air about him that was pleasant to behold. Jarrod had recognized him as the only son of a man he had known in St. Louis - a man very prominent and wealthy, he remembered.

"What are you doing here, Jim?" he enquired.

"Why, I live in Chicago now, you know," was the reply.

"You do?"

"Didn't you know, sir? I left home over a year ago. I'm hoeing my own row now, Mr. Jarrod."

"What's wrong, Jim?"

"Father and I couldn't agree. He wanted me to take to the patent medicine business, because he has made a fortune in it."

"Very natural," nodding.