

## Clockwork by Philip Pullman

“You know very well what I want!” cried Karl. “I want a figure for the clock! Something to show for all the time I should have spent in making it! Anything to avoid the shame I’ll feel tomorrow!”



“Nothing could be easier,” said Dr Kalmenius. “You spoke – and there is what you wished for.” And he pointed to the little sledge he’d pulled behind him into the parlour. The runners stood in a puddle of melted snow, and the canvas cover was damp.

“What is it?” said Karl, who had suddenly become very afraid.

“Uncover it! Take off the canvas!”

Karl got unsteadily to his feet and slowly untied the rope holding the cover down. Then he pulled the canvas off. In the sledge was the most perfect piece of metal sculpture he had ever seen. It was the figure a knight in armour, made of gleaming silvery metal, holding a sharp sword. Karl gasped at the detail, and walked around looking at it from all angles. Every piece of armour-plating was riveted in such a way that it would move smoothly over the one below, and as for the sword - He touched it, and drew his hand back at once, looking at the blood running down his fingers.

“It’s like a razor,” he said.

“Only the best will do for Sir Ironsoul,” said Dr Kalmenius.

“Sir Ironsoul....What a piece of work! Oh if he were in the tower among the other figures, my name would be made forever!” said Karl bitterly. “And how does he move? What does he do? He does work by clockwork, I suppose? Or is there some kind of goblin in there? A spirit or a devil of some kind?” With a smooth whirr and a ticking of delicate machinery, the figure began to move. The knight raised his sword and turned his helmeted head to look for Karl, and then stepped off the sledge and moved towards him.

“No! What’s he doing?” said Karl in alarm, backing away. Sir Ironsoul kept going. Karl moved aside, but the figure turned too, and before Karl could dodge away, he was pinned in the corner, with the little knight’s sword moving closer and closer.

“What’s he doing? That sword is sharp – stop it Doctor! Make it stop!”

Dr Kalmenius whistled a simple haunting little tune, and Sir Ironsoul fell still. The point of the sword was right a Karl’s throat.

“What- who- how did it start? Did you set it off?”

“Oh I didn’t start him,” said Dr Kalmenius. “You did.”