



Complete

Tin Man (US TV 2007) · Not Rated · 2417 words

by Arukir

Contents

Complete..... 3

Complete

Fandom: Tin Man (US TV 2007) Rating: Not Rated Category: Gen

Warnings: Creator chose not to add warnings

Relationships: Glitch | Ambrose & The Queen | Lavender Eyes (Tin Man)

Characters: The Queen | Lavender Eyes (Tin Man), Glitch | Ambrose (Tin Man), DG (Tin Man), Wyatt Cain, Raw (Tin Man)

Tags: Reunions, Memory Loss, Brain Damage, Male-Female Friendship, My First Work in This Fandom, Light Angst, Happy Ending, Ambrose was a mad inventor but also really really formal, Lavender loves both sides of him

Words: 2417 Chapters: 1 chapter Status: Complete Published: 2026-05-22

Queen Lavender, after many annuals, finally has her family and her kingdom back. But her home isn't quite complete again, not yet.

(Number of fics until I reach 300: 9...)

I would like to add a note that despite the way the fic references the situation, I don't think of the brain in the jar as the real Ambrose. He's a broken half of Ambrose, just like Glitch is, because he still only has (only is) half a brain.

"My old friend," Lavender whispered. She had reunited with her husband and daughters at last, and though she was sure that many more tears would be spilt between them, she felt she could afford to put them to the side for a moment. Though their absence had weighed heaviest on her heart, there were others whose presence she had missed terribly.

"Hi, I'm Glitch!" Ambrose introduced himself to her, grinning widely. His face twisted in confusion. "Do I know you? You look familiar." His face reset to the smile, then twisted again. "Do I know you? You look familiar." It reset again. "Do I know you? You look familiar." And again. "Do I know you? You look—"

She placed a hand on his cheek briefly before letting it fall, her eyes catching on that terrible zipper cutting its way across his head, and felt her heart break all over again. "Oh Ambrose, what have they done to you?"

"Ambrose?" he repeated, questioningly. Then his eyes lit up. "Hey wait, I know that — that's me! Old me. Jar me?" He trailed off, seeming to give real consideration as to which one was correct, before turning to a man on his left with a bright, excited look. "Hey, Cain! Cain! She knows me!"

"You know her too, headcase," the man, Cain, said. It was only his own fond smile that stopped Lavender from scowling at him for the insulting moniker. He put a hand on Ambrose's shoulder, before dipping his head towards her. "That there's the Queen."

"The Queen," Ambrose breathed, eyes going wide. He turned back to her, studying her face, and *finally* some form of recognition seemed to flicker across his features. "I, I used to serve you, didn't I? I never forgot that, not fully. Oh! Wait, I should, uh, give me a second..."

He backed up a few places, surprising her by dropping into a flawless formal bow — the kind one was supposed to use for *foreign* monarchs, sure, but otherwise every bit the graceful Ambrose she remembered.

"That, that wasn't right, was it?" he said as he lifted his head back up, frowning deeply. "I'm sorry, I'm not good at remembering, and I know I know it, or I know that I knew it, but I'm not good at remembering and—"

"It was perfect, Ambrose," she told him, gently cutting off his ramble, and laughed even as her eyes filled with tears. She touched her hand to his cheek again, and this time he leaned into her touch, his eyes fluttering closed.

Oh, her dear Ambrose. He was going to hate this memory later (because there would be a later, he would get his full mind back, she wouldn't let anything prevent it), she knew. Fumbling so much in front of her, in front of others. Forgetting the manners he'd always prized so highly.

But she couldn't bring herself to care, right then, about formality or propriety or any of the other dozen things he'd spent their lives scolding her over. All she cared about in that moment was that her dearest friend was there, in front of her. Hurting, broken, but alive.

Ambrose's hand closed over hers, still on his cheek, his eyes opening with a small smile. Then something seemed to flinch in him, and his fond look was replaced with one of mild confusion. "Hi! I'm Glitch. Do I know you? You look familiar."

Lavender felt more tears carve wet paths down her cheeks as she pulled her hand back towards her. DG, her angel, came up and placed her own hand on her arm.

"This is my mother, Glitch," DG explained gently.

"Your mother?" Ambrose's eyes lit up again, his grin seeming to crack his face nearly as much as his zipper split his head. He turned to Lavender, all excitement and move-

ment and the barely-suppressed energy she normally only saw when he was locked up in his lab. "It's so nice to meet you! You have one Hell of a daughter, I'll tell you. She's so smart and kind and—"

Lavender watched in bemused fascination as her oldest friend continued to ramble happily about her youngest daughter, informing her that she had restored the Papay orchards and rescued him from munchkins and defeated the witch (she knew that one, but she didn't interrupt) and *jumped off a cliff* and and and—

Cain whacked Ambrose lightly in the side. "I think that's enough for now, Zipperhead. Don't overwhelm the poor lady."

Lavender nearly snorted at that, bittersweetly imagining how Ambrose would've protested her being called a 'poor lady' had he been in his right mind. She was beginning to like this Cain, she decided, even in spite of (especially because of) his rude streak.

Ambrose blinked, rubbing the place where he'd been whacked in mild offense. He looked at her again. "Oh. Sorry. Once I get talking, I don't really stop. Say, have we met before? You look—"

"Mother," DG interrupted him, which was probably for the best lest Lavender break down right then and there, "this is Glitch. He's my friend, and one of the smartest men I've ever met." Lavender might've thought her daughter was mocking him, had it not been for her earnest tone and his pleased smile at the praise. "He's helped me out many times, and if it's possible, I'd really like to help him now."

"Do I need help with something?" Ambrose asked, perplexed but still smiling.

"Yeah, headcase," Cain told him, clapping him on the shoulder. He laughed, but Lavender could see the same bittersweet feeling in his eyes that she felt. "You need help. But don't worry, we're in just the right place to get it."

"Glitch will meet Ambrose again?" the Viewer that had come with them asked. "Glitch will become Ambrose again?"

"It is possible, right?" DG asked, sounding worried. "To put his brain back in?"

"Of course it's possible," Ambrose cut in, scoffing, launching into a rather complicated lecture on the nature of the Zipperhead procedure. He lost the thread halfway through and started introducing himself again ("he gets more glitchy when he's nervous," DG tells her quietly. "I think he's really happy to see you again, the part of

him that recognizes you anyways."), but for a few moments he sounded just as he should — arrogant and brilliant and entirely her dear, dear Ambrose.

"There is a risk," Lavender admitted quietly, fear flowing through her. But she had lived in fear, with fear, for fifteen annuals. She breathed through it, past it, and calmly added, "But many things carry risk. I won't... I won't force you back on that table, Am-Glitch," she added, somewhat reluctantly. He looked surprised at her words.

"Don't you want me— Ambrose— jar me back?" Glitch asked, confused and sad and perhaps a bit heartbroken himself.

"Of course I do," she assured him. "But you could die, or become even more... 'glitchy' then you are now. I will leave the choice to risk such things or not to you, my old friend. I won't make it for you."

That inner flinch happened again, but this time his gaze became sharper rather than farther away. He frowned reproachfully at her. "You really should, Lav, you know almost as well as I do how impaired a Zipperhead's cognition—" he blinked again, cutting himself off, mouth dropping open. "Lav," he repeated, chuckling wetly. "I remember... I remember you, and my lab, and my— oh dear. I remember me."

Whatever it was that he remembered, he forgot it again soon after. But the feeling of the moment seemed to remain, as every time he was asked afterwards, he was adamant that the risk was worth it.

"Jar me deserves better than being jar me," was the most coherent explanation they received from him about it, his features set and stubborn for a while before he randomly began to talk rather wistfully about jam.

The operation to reconnect his brain required weeks of preparation, not helped by everything else they needed to do to restore the kingdom. In those weeks, Lavender got to know Glitch.

She couldn't stop seeing Ambrose every time she looked at him, but she learned to appreciate the differences between them too. DG had been right about the 'glitching' she'd seen before being worse than his usual — once he'd calmed down, he actually became mostly functional, or at least capable of remembering that they'd already met for more than a minute.

"Look!" he shouted as they walked together through the palace gardens, pointing up at a bird. "Your Highness, look! Look!"

"I'm looking, Glitch, I'm looking," she told him with a chuckle. She still hated calling him by that awful nickname, but he responded to it far more consistently than he did Ambrose, so she'd learned to live with it. "It's quite a lovely bluebird."

"It's not a bluebird," he said in complaint. "It's, uh, it's..." His brow wrinkled in thought, and just when she assumed he'd move past it he instead snapped his fingers and rattle off a long, complex series of unusual words that she supposed was the bird's scientific name. Though perhaps not its *ozlish* scientific name, she allowed. "Or," he added proudly, sticking his finger in the air, "the common Zone Sapphire. See? Its beak has a blue shine to it, if you look at it from the right angle. Not a bluebird."

These were her favorite moments. The times when she could see why her daughter called him the smartest man she'd ever met, even with only half a brain. The times when he was almost Ambrose again.

"Oh yes, now I see," Lavender agreed, patting his arm. "Not a bluebird at all."

He looked down at where her hand still rested on his arm. Then, with a smile, he lifted it with his own and pressed a light kiss to her knuckles. "Thank you," he told her earnestly, brown eyes locking with her own, "for still being my friend."

And before she could come up with a way to respond to that, before she could even process the sincerity lacing his voice, he promptly dropped to the ground to get a closer look at a ladybug.

Knowing the moment had passed and that there was nothing she could do about it, Lavender sighed and gracefully sat down next to him. He frowned at her, brow furrowed as if he knew that there was *something* wrong with the Queen of the realm sitting in the dirt but he couldn't quite figure out what it was.

After a moment, he shrugged and went back to his bug-watching. Lavender tried to pretend that she didn't miss the way he would've scolded her for this, before. His ever-present insistence on a set of standards that he could no longer even remember.

She also tried to ignore the way she was already mourning moments like this one — sitting in the dirt, observing a ladybug as if it was the most fascinating thing in the world, like children again — and the small pang of regret that Glitch had to go for her Ambrose to come back.

It was an awful thought. An awful feeling. A true one.

(Perhaps she shouldn't have let herself get to know Glitch)

When it came time for the rebraining, Glitch walked towards the surgeon with his back straight and his head held high.

They all politely pretended that they couldn't see the way his hands shook or how badly he flinched when he was strapped to the gurney.

When Lavender went to see him after the operation, she was directed by the doctors to one of the smaller dining rooms in the palace.

"Cain! You *promised* you'd throw that damn thing away!"

"And you promised that you'd stop stealing my food. Guess we're both liars, Sweet-heart."

Lavender walked in just in time to see an indignant, scowling Glitch trying to snatch a squirt bottle from Cain's hand while DG and Raw watched, helping neither party. Soon, they were all four laughing and smiling, the very picture of close friends.

Glitch howled when Cain squirted him again, a spray of water hitting him in the face, and he seemed to be considering upending his plate on the Tin Man's head when he caught sight of Lavender.

"Your Majesty!" He hopped up and, in one fluid motion, dropped into a perfect formal bow. The right one, that time. He was smiling when he rose. "Greetings, Your Highness."

"Ambrose?" she asked, wary and hopeful. There was never a guarantee with a rebraining; it was part of why the Zipperhead procedure was usually only used for the higher level criminals. "Is it really you?"

"More-or-less," he answered, knocking himself lightly on the side of the head with a loose fist. "The, uh, the doctors say I'll still glitch sometimes. I might even revert, occasionally." He grimaced at the thought. "But, yeah. I'm me again. Well, I mean, I did go

through some pretty rough annuals, so not exactly the same. Close enough, though, I think."

I hope, she heard, underneath his words. She could practically see what he was thinking, in the way his forehead wrinkled and his eyes flickered across her face: *I'm not the same, I think I'll never be quite the same again, are you okay with that?*

"Oh, my Ambrose." She smiled. *You're whole again, old friend*, she knew he heard, saw, knew she meant. *We can figure everything else out later*. "I'm so glad to have you back."

He smiled back at her, smaller than Glitch's usual grins but no less open or bright. Exactly the smile she remembered.

Lavender had gotten her husband, daughters, and kingdom back weeks before. They were slowly but steadily learning to be a family again. And now, looking her oldest friend in the eye for the first time in annuals, she finally felt like they would succeed.

Ambrose wasn't the only one that was whole again, she mused, feeling that last little crack in her heart seal shut.

Her home was finally complete.

— end of "Complete" —