



Fee Fie Fo Phooey!

Tammye Brown

Fable

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By T.Jenelle

“Yeah, that’ll ought to do it. Just be sure to leverage the value-add if he hiccups before you push the pen. ...I hear you, but bottom line, that twenty-percent boost in back-end revenue sales will do wonders for his bottom line. Okay, sounds great—later Charlie.”

Big “G,” the ten-foot, five-hundred-pound, hardworking online investor, ended his phone call and commenced to hail his able assistant and lifelong friend, Helda.

“Helda, Helda. Helda! Where’s that warm milk?” Usually calm and peaceful, Big “G” had been on a veritable emotional roller coaster. One moment, he’d be on a euphoric, success-induced high while basking in latest profit upturns, the next; incorrigible—it is all he can do to keep angst at bay when reminded of the plights of so many, as he puts it, “who lack the fortitude, determination and critical information to change their very lives.” “Coming your high-ness; about to step onto the lift now. Nice and hot, 120°, just like you like it,” the demure, kind-hearted Helda announced.

“We really do need to get that upgrade,” the giant king fussed. “That thing is taking forever to get you up here! How close are you?”

“Just passing your royal elbow,” replied four-foot-two, ninety-eight-pound Helda. “What’s news today, she inquired.” “Not much save some poor sorry valley chap who sold his mother’s cow for a hand full of beans. Gotta get Charlie and the crew on the beat around the entire valley region! Forty-five in attendance at the last Investrian Summit wasn’t so bad, but there’s still a bunch of lame brains out there that don’t know beans about makin’ money! If they only knew. My simple three-step system could make ‘em a fortune!”

“Here ya go,” said Helda, extending the steaming cup of milk to the big oaf, her pet name for the giant king. “Will there be anything else? Oh yes, Sire, I lifted your eye-phone up to the upper shelf by your bed.” “Thanks, Helda. You’re so good to me! Ahhhhh. Nothin like a sip’o warm milk to relax a big lug like me. No. That’ll do. Just remember to lock my counting room, and check to see Harp and Hen are content. Oh, and Helda, be a dear and grab hold to this pesky ingrown hair on my chin on your way down, please and thank you. Sleep tight, my loyal friend.”

“Thank you. Am I free to go once I finish drinking the juice,” Ma inquired of the blood donor center nurse, notably more weakened than usual. Evening meals at the Dittle home had been scant and scarce if not absent over the past week. She would use the small check from her blood donation this day to buy a cup of barley, a little meal and some oil for the household’s only kerosene lamp.

“Sure thing, Mrs. Dittle,” the nurse responded. “You know the drill. Just take it easy for a while—no heavy liftin.’ We want to keep our faithful donors pumped up. Pun intended! Here’s your check.”

Ma forced a quick smile. “Thank you kindly, Nurse Paula. ‘See you next time.’”

Along with his poor mother, Jack lived in a shoddy, three-room shack that was becoming increasingly weather-worn and rickety after withstanding two decades of battering rain and yearly blizzard-like snows. Things had gotten even worse last month. The Dittles were dealt a devastating blow, when during Fall harvest, the corn crop suffered a vicious worm and beetle attack. Unfortunately, for some time prior to that loss, Ma and Jack had just been getting by. As an attempt to protect a smaller planting field, they had spread fertilizer left over from the previous season over the fragile seeds. Without adequate quantities of pesticide fertilizer product, the tender shoots were unprepared for the onslaught of the hungry insects. Behind the crop failure situation, Ma and Jack had encountered a severe financial strain. And as winter approached, both knew a plan was needed to save them out of certain financial demise. The Diddles had already sold or traded all they had, except a poorly cow. And Jack’s efforts to help the struggling family of two had often met with disappointingly meager results. Something had to change quickly and for the better. It was their only hope!

Ma turned the key into the rusted lock on the warped, splintered door to find Jack sitting on his bed with a suspicious grin on his face.

“Hey Ma,” he said through smiling teeth.

“What’s up, Jack?”

“Nice choice of words, Ma. Well, er uhm, nothin’ yet, Jack stuttered, startled within himself by his sudden loss

for words. “You probably won’t believe me now but...well...just you wait. I’m finally ‘bout to do you proud!”
“Yeah, yeah, Jack. It’ll do me just fine now for you to quit your yackin’ and get your chores done around here before the cows come home. Speakin’ of cows, make yourself useful and take care of ol’ Bessie out there. I reckon she’s good for enough to mix in with the corn meal and a dollop of molasses for a short batch of sweet bread.”

“Sweet bread again?” Ain’t you just bout had it with eatin’ sweet bread alls the time, Ma? High time we dined on some good tastin viddles! Don’t you agree Mrs. Dittle?”

“And just how do you suppose we’re going do that, Jack? Would you kindly stop with the yackin’ and get crackin! Bessie ain’t gonna milk hersef.”

“Well, er, Ma that’s what I been tryin’ to tell ya. I met a man on my way to the auction and he almost winked a hood at me. He sho’nuff did! Reckon he didn’t know who he was dealin’ wit.”

“Winked a what...Jack what on earth are you talkin’ about? Time’s a wastin’ and you ain’t gave me no cash or no pawn slip...reckon that means you didn’t sell ol’ Bessie at the auction. Get on out there and bring me that milk! And are you meanin’ some man tried to hoodwink you?” Oh no Jack! You didn’t...not again!!

“Now Ma, hold on to your leggins,’ and don’t you go and try to steal my thunder this time.” I done good! You won’t bee-leave how I worked that so’ry sap over. Tol him he didn’t know Jack! Offered to trade me some magic beans—a whole handful, for sickly ol’ Bessie; then snatched ‘em back when I went to wretch for ‘em. I sho’ed him! Shoved ol’ Bessie right up under him; he lurched fo’ward and I grabbed them beans and headed down the lane to the valley just as fast as my legs could carry me!”

“Oh no, Jack,” Ma shouted with utter anguish, “you’ve really gone and done it this time! Ol’ Bessie was all we had left! I don’t even want to ask you what you got for her. It’s you who don’t know jack! You have managed, solo, to “sell” our last for a handful of beans—magic smagic!!! Let me see these beans you gave our Bessie away for!”

“You just don’t get it Ma. What I’m tellin’ you ain’t sunk in yet. You won’t need no sweet bread no more, Ma! We bout to be livin’ large; high on the hog! Just you wait and see and all because I used the old noggin,” Jack boasted, poking the side of his fishing hat with his finger. He took the brown crumpled bag from his stained overall pocket and ceremoniously poured the mysterious beans out into Ma’s hands.

“And just what will this little handful of beans produce, Jack,” Ma asked skeptically. “Green peas, squash—carrots, no no no. Silly me. Green beans, right? That’s what you meant by ‘beanstalk?’”

“No Ma,” Jack protested! These beans will grow us rich! You see that spot between the barn and that old oak,” Jack asked his mother, holding her around the waist while pointing out the door. “I’m bout to plant these

magic beans right over yonder. This time tomorra, we'll be looking at a gi-normous beanstalk. I'll climb it clear up to the top and we'll have everything we could ever want, Ma! Just you wait and see!"

"Sounds like another fairy tale to me, Jack, but I have always told you to dream big," Ma conceded. "I still think you should have given that 3-step investment strategy thingy a try. Sure, it has its risks, but magic beans and a beanstalk, really, Jack?"

"Smack smack smack." The giant king exaggeratedly feigned kissing the golden oval-shaped treasures. YUM YUM YUM! These golden eggs feel great!"

"How good are they at smooching, Big "G"?"

"Very funny, Helda. You know, I could do with some music about now. Fetch me my harp! Best investment since I started Investrian!"

"I shall do as you wish, Sire." Hey, where did that huge plant come from," Helda inquired, pointing at the newly-sprouted beanstalk from her rocking chair across the room, now prominently billowing outside of the parlor window. Did you order something from your cousin, Seymour, the scientist?"

"No, not lately, Helda. He's been layin' low since that clump of hair weave was discovered caught between the leaves of a weird purple philodendron plant he grafted onto a Venus Flytrap. Too bad for Sey' that the plant went crazy about the same time that poor carhop went missing. Poor guy," the big oaf lamented. He stretched out his now tired and lumbering legs. Yawning, he slurred, "Never mind bringing my Harp now. I'm feeling sleepy. Think I'll take a cheetah nap," said the groggy giant. Oh, and Helda, add a neti pot to the shopping list. Been feeling a bit stuffed up in the ol' snoot lately."

"As you wish, Helda answered. It is best to always keep your nose clean."

"Jack! Jack!" Ma screeched, as she grabbed up her tattered apron and galloped from the backyard onto the rickety porch. Come out of the dog house! Them beans you planted must've been on steroids!" Jack was out of Brutus' shabby abode before you could say 'hocus pocus.'

"I knew it! It's a miracle!" Yippity, yippity yahoo!! Our troubles are over, Ma! My beans done hit pay dirt!! I'll just climb up there where I just know our fortune is just waitin' for us."

With hands on her hips, Ma signed loudly. "Slow down, Jack, and you be careful. All that pattin' yourself on the back could put stress on your climbin' arm."

"I got this, Ma," Jack replied confidently, and hurriedly scampered out the door. His magic beans were as good

as planted.

Late that night, just as the magic bean salesman had assured Jack, spanning eight-feet wide and fifty-feet tall was a blue-green, lushly-leaved beanstalk, the stalk itself an amazing two-feet thick in diameter. “Here I go...straight up this pole...a carryin’ this empty pouch...gonna tip right past Big “G” a-sleepin’ on the couch...that ogre cain’t stop me now...gonna snatch that hen...split, and how!” Jack had released his inner-rapper, as he crooned and made merry. He had momentarily forgotten himself, caught up in the excitement, distracted by the blaring, thunderous snoring that violently shook the beanstalk. He soon realized he had blown it! His momentary fanciful escape to rap-sody zen-city, had awakened the sleeping giant.

“Ughhhh. Uhhhhh. Sniff. Sniff, sniff, sniff. What’s this? Does my nose deceive me? Do I smell the blood of a bad-English English man? He muttered to himself...hard to tell with these *&)%\$+^*? Stuffed up sinuses,” then yelled for Helda.

Meanwhile Jack, hiding behind a chair, calculated his next move. He darted past the semi-conscious, smell-impaired giant, his eyes frantically darting about the room in search of the golden hen. Helda rounded the corner from the kitchen with the hen under-arm. Jack grabbed it out of her arms, squeezing Hen so hard, a golden egg shot out and rolled backwards towards the now alert Big “G”. How Jack wanted that egg! He could finally show his mother it would be he who would rescue them out of their impoverished lives. He, who would be right, this time! But could he take the chance of being caught to retrieve the golden trophy? After all, he had the hen who laid the golden eggs. “Better play it safe,” he thought, and never breaking his stride, he ran as fast as his legs could carry him to the opening beneath the dense clouds at the beanstalk. Four-feet from the ground, he jumped to the ground, practically strangling poor Hen, half running, half falling. At last, he stumbled into the Diddle farmhouse, slamming then locking the door behind him. Ma, with a heavy heart, was in the tiny kitchen, searching high and low in the dusty cupboards for any morsel of food she may have overlooked the last time she had looked. She wiped her hands on her apron and rushed towards the door. Staring at Jack staring back at her, Ma steadied her heart, bracing herself for the worse.

Ma found her muted voice and shouted, “Jack! What in the world?” Jack spat out his daunting hen-swiping caper above the beanstalk at a speed that could call any auctioneer to task, then showed Ma the golden hen. Ma jerked Hen from his grasp and instantly began yelling, “lay! LAY!” Two shiny, slimy golden eggs rolled out of the flustered fowl and came to rest in the folds of her apron. A fiendish glint now in her eyes, Ma smiled broadly. A high-pitched cackle broke slowly, ever so slowly, into eerily loud, high-pitched and crazed laughter.

“We’re rich, we’re rich,” she victoriously exclaimed, jumping up and down in wide-eyed wonder! “Go back, Jack,” Ma greedily insisted. You must go back. I want that harp!!! I must have that harp!!!”

The next day was anything but business as usual at the “G” estate above the white puffy clouds. Restful sleep had alluded Big “G”, and even after Helda, all in all, brought him more than a gallon of warmed milk, he had remained inconsolable. Having endured his endless rants about his missing hen and the gall of the chap who stole him, Helda had suggested they have some lunch. But a side-of-lamb-with-all-the-trimmings-spread later, Big “G” had resumed his belly-aching. Now late afternoon, the two were on the upper open porch amid the wispy floating clouds. Helda fully bowed up and down, fanning the sweating lounging giant with one hand and feeding him globe grapes with the other. She handed Big “G” a prepared neti pot. After the nasal congestion relief treatment, Big “G” began to relive the dream he was having just prior to Jack’s uninvited appearance, temporarily turning from diabolical visions of the fate of one fugitive hen thief. “It’s strange, he recalled, I could swear I heard rapping about the time that scoundrel barged in here and took my golden hen! He’s mine! I’ll grind his bones to...to...yuck. That’s just gross! I don’t think so, the diminished king sighed,” recoiling at the thought of munching on sweet bread baked with a cup of Jack’s bony remains. “Your beloved hen will be safely back in her case in no time, my king,” Helda offered, patting the big oaf’s pinkie, consoling him.

The king retorted, honing his bull-seeing-red indignation, “He just had to go there. I’ll fix him! And I know just thing. He will rue the day he dared to rip me off!!”

That evening, to Helda’s astonishment, just a few hours after witnessing the barrage of Big “G’s” damning threats, and surviving his surly, cantankerous moodiness, a broad smile now adorned the king giant’s big round face. During the afternoon, the he had taken a day trip to the sauna lounge at the mega spa. Afterwards, he enjoyed a feast-like lunch at his favorite restaurant. Big “G” was now in a blissful splendor. Relax and composed, he admitted coming to his senses and deciding he’d take a more diplomatic approach with Jack. He would teach the hapless chap a thing or two about investing—investing in a life of financial freedom without taking things that didn’t belong to him. He would teach him to become an owner versus a shyster, a boss instead of a booster, a hero in place of a hen-thief!

As the clock struck twelve, Jack readied himself to go back up the beanstalk. He knew he’d be minced meat if he lost his nerve. The giant king was in his counting house counting his giant money while listening to Harp sing and play blissfully. Satisfied all his gold and silver was accounted for, each piece cleaned and polished and

carefully replaced in his safe, Big “G” relaxed his shoulders, plopped his hands on his lap, interlacing his fingers and slid into a bloated blob, tapping his feet to the harmonic beat. Harp suddenly broke into to that rap from big oaf’s dream.” Big “G” again became enraged as he heard the blatantly conniving lyrics Harp was belting out. “He’s gonna snatch you and run, is he! Why, I’ll string that scrawny string bean up by his pocket protector and play him!! Just let me get my hands on that...” A sound coming from outside the parlor window halted the haranguing words Big “G” had been spewing from pursed lips. “Shhhhhhhhh,” he cautioned. “Go back into your case,” Big “G,” he said, now whispering, “and don’t come out until you hear me tap. Then open your case and sing that rap.” The giant king sauntered over to the couch and laid down on his back, flinging a massive coverlet over him. He closed his eyes and began to breathe rhythmically as his bulging, hairy chest deceptively heaved up and down. Would he stifle the urge to tear the beanstalk-climbing lad to pieces from limb to limb, or would he go forward with his plan to enlighten him about the Investrian proven path to financial freedom?

Jack hoisted himself up the beanstalk, and shimmied his body round and round, up, up and up until at last he reached the top. Stepping off, he walked slowly and lightly, lest he crackle a twig or branch, as he crept towards the humongous house. Barely breathing, Jack scuttled past the gate, then stopped to listen. Not a sound. When reached house, he noticed the two-story high door was ajar. He leaned in, narrowing his eyes. Where he might find the last needed item that would ensure hope of his future, the unsuspecting harp? Jack had attributed his decision to abandon earlier thoughts of swiping Big “G’s” jewels to his considerate generosity. He could have plotted to rob the big oaf of those pricey gems as well. Jack had smiled and given himself a quick pat on the back before returning his thoughts to the matter at hand. Still crouching at the crack in the door, Jack and peered into the living room.

“There the big oaf is,” he mouthed. Much to Jack’s surprise he heard no snoring. He hearkened in uncertainty, pensive in the deafening silence. Was the giant king asleep? Jack tiptoed towards the couch to find out just how sleep or awake the he was.

Suddenly, Big “G” turned over with a jerk, and begin tapping loudly on the wall. The door of Harp’s case tore open, and Harp leaped out, dipping his head and moving his hands to the beat of Jack’s rap he was imitating. “Hey, he’s singing my rap! It is...er...I was...well now surely you know I didn’t really mean those things,” Jack stammered, as he cautiously backed away from the couch. Now visibly trembling, his loose overhauls shaking like he was brandishing a jack hammer, he continued, “I was kidding...I was just kidding!

Just then, the giant drifted into a mellowness that afforded him the ability to be present on his couch, with petrified Jack blabbering before him, while participating in an aloof, dream-like exchange within himself. “Kill him or free him; that is the question. You will change a life, one way or another. What’s it gonna be?” The big oaf then experienced a vivid reflection of a conversation with Jack’s mother during which she had shared elements of Jack’s past. In some respects, Jack’s tale of woe had reminded him of his own. Neither of them had the benefit of an enduring relationship with their fathers. Big “G”’s dad had been tragically killed by mob who had accused him of masterminding a ponzi scheme. Mr. Diddle had met his untimely death when he suffered a kick to the head by a spooked cow NASA had deployed, along with his fiddle-playing cat pal, during an early voyage to the moon. Life circumstances from their childhood days on, had presented both Jack, the giant and their loved ones with financial and other strife-related challenges, resulting in the necessity to arm themselves for battle. Each was compelled to choose artillery from life’s weaponry and set out to combat unrelenting, juggler-vein seeking villains of life. The giant king could personally relate to such a juxtaposition.

“I chose long ago to adopt a do-or-die mentality to become successful; to experience carefree living with the ability to bless others. I’ve done one, and must continue to make it my resolve, no matter what, to do the other.” Just then, the haze was lifted, returning Big “G” to full alertness to Jack’s distorted face and nervous hands. He asked Jack to sit down. Jack, first hesitating, did as the giant asked.

“Jack, I could have your head for what you’ve done already, lifting my prized hen from right under my very nose! And now, you have the unmitigated audacity to come back here to steal from me again! Clearing his throat, Big “G” paused and continued. “Instead, I stand here and offer you and your mother a chance to embark upon an amazing lifestyle, the likes of which you have never seen. If you will fetch my hen and safely return her to me, in turn, I’ll teach you and Ma how to dramatically change your financial lives. Lack and poverty will no longer deprive you and Ma of happiness and well-being. So, what’s it gonna be? Tell you what. I’ll get the tea service and some crumpets from the parlor Helda is preparing for us, and we’ll hash everything out, man-to-man. I’ll be right back.”

Jack, though moved by the outpouring of the giant’s benevolent heart, felt a surge of impatience. He turned his thoughts more towards enjoying the fruit, if tainted, instant gratification brings rather than to incline himself toward the future rewards the well-intentioned giant spoke of. As soon as Big “G” left the room, he forcefully grabbed Harp, scolding him for his rap-rendition betrayal, and made a run for it.

Once back at the house, Jack had snarfed down a sandwich and, exhausted from his most recent escapade,

flopped down on the broken pull-out bed for a little nap. Harp, seizing the opportunity to reclaim his and golden hen's freedom, hastened Jack's slumbering experience by softly singing and playing big oaf's fondest lullaby. Soon Jack was doing some snoring of his own. Harp deftly sprang into action, grabbing Hen—lots of grabbing going on in this story—and bolted for the beanstalk.

From within the brick-lined walls of the sitting room of the castle, Big "G" warmly embraced Harp, thanking her for her quick thinking. Next, he bear-hugged Hen (who spontaneously laid 2 eggs) in a generous lavishing of affection on his two prized possessions. Big "G" abruptly Interrupted the heart-wrenching Kodak moment when it occurred to him that he should promptly destroy the beanstalk. Helda! Bring me the air compressor. The giant king fashioned a large loop from fused outdoor phone cables, and tied it to a heavy rope. He grunted ferociously as he hoisted the contraption over the beanstalk. He then affixed the other end to a pulley, added a handle to the gizmo and attached that end to the air compressor. In a matter of seconds, the beanstalk was abruptly uprooted and flew wildly over the castle into oblivion. When Jack awoken several hours later, realizing Harp and Hen were both nowhere to be found, he rushed from the house into the yard where he found the monstrous beanstalk to be also ominously absent. Mortified and defeated, Jack squawked, "Fee Fie Fo Phooey!" at the top of his lungs, slapping his hands on his head and weeping unabashedly.

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Ma, utterly saddened at the thought of not returning to Jack and to their home of twenty years, was consoled by Helda's soothing words, a hot toddy and the assurance that Big "G" would teach her how to acquire untold wealth and to make a fulfilling life for herself and her son. As time went on, Big "G" often lamented about how Jack should have just asked him at the beginning of this tale how he, too, could live an abundant, worry-free life.

***** Eight months later from a yacht in Barbados*****

"Ha ha ha," Ma gleefully gushed! "Ahhhh, this is the life! She lifted her sunglasses and snapped a selfie. I can just lay here soaking up the rays, sipping ice cream drinks and living the life of Riley! And on the off-chance I get temporarily bored with that, there's always my favorite music."

"Indeed, indeed. We've come a long way," Helda agrees. What is your favorite music these days, Ma?"

"The sound of "cha-ching, cha-ching I hear each time I get a new deposit into my bank account—that's music to my ears! I only hope Jack used the money I dropped down to him before we left wisely; and even more so, I pray that he used the copy of Investrian Get Started materials in that bundle.

After stowing his fishing gear, Big “G” joined Ma and Helda on the main deck, his latest toys in hand—a diamond tear-crying, easily amused hyena and a portable sun-powered expresso coconut tree. (Steamy fresh coconut milk latte, anyone?) “Now this sure beats the life of a stalk’er—of the bean variety, that is!!! Ha, ha, ha!! The big oaf found most anything funny these days. He had been true to himself and done that other thing...forgiven. (Maybe next he’ll work on his comedic prowess.) In doing so, Big “G” had extended the proverbial olive leaf to Jack. He had helped Ma learn how to reinvent herself and amass a handsome personal fortune. In gigantic ways, he had grown.

“Heh, heh heh ho, ho ho!!!, you’re killing me,” the big lug laughed, this time referring to himself aloud in his banter. He was, once again, at peace.

For miles around, his frequent, bellowing laughter resounded from the highest mountain to the lowest valley; as evidenced by the trembling, downtrodden fellow sitting in the often jarred, light-bulb swinging bean-sorting room, in the paltry house that Jack built.

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