

The Financial Fairy Tales

The
Magic
Magpie

Daniel Britton

Acknowledgements

The Financial Fairy Tales are a series of stories to encourage young readers to learn about money, enterprise and the business of life. It is my sincere wish that through the enjoyment of these books the messages will be read and absorbed and in some way contribute to creating positive values and beliefs.

This 2nd edition contains a quiz as a fun way of testing understanding of the money ideas and concepts in the book.

Also in The Financial Fairy Tales series:

Dreams Can Come True

The Magic Magpie

The Last Gold Coin

The Troll Bridge

Activity Book

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The Magic Magpie





CHAPTER 1

The Vegetable Farm

In the green and fertile Kingdom of Agris, Jacob and his sister Hannah tended their farm in the peaceful, rolling countryside. They loved the fresh air, the feel of the soil between their fingers and the taste of their fresh vegetables, but secretly Hannah dreamed of more. She longed to have a little more time and money so she could start a flower garden, rather than spend all her time growing carrots, peppers and cabbage.

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Once a week they sold their vegetables at market and bought other food. This week it was Hannah's turn to tend their stall, so Jacob filled a sack full of vegetables for her and sent her on her way. He gave her a list of food to buy on her way home.

In town, Hanna saw signs for a crop-growing contest. Whoever grew the largest watermelon would win one hundred gold coins.

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“With that kind of money, we might be able to spare enough to buy flower seeds!” Hannah exclaimed.

On the way to her market stall, she stopped to trade for some watermelon seeds. Josh, the man who owned the stall beside her, was willing to trade his seeds for a few of her peppers. Hannah carefully wrapped the watermelon seeds in a piece of cloth and stored them in her pocket for later.

Then she placed the rest of her produce on display to sell.

Hannah was very pleased to sell all of her produce and earned ten gold coins – a very good profit. She put them



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in her purse and walked amongst the other stalls, searching for the items on Jacob's list. An old woman stopped her.

"Why buy food when you can have the secret to wealth?" the woman asked.

Hannah perked up. If she were wealthy, she could start her flower garden. "How can I find the secret to wealth?"

The old woman was carrying a little iron cage with a rather grumpy looking magpie inside.

"This is Martha the magic magpie," she said. "She's trained to find silver, gold and all kinds of treasure."



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Hannah didn't look convinced.

"Watch, I'll show you," said the old woman as she set the cage on the ground and opened its little door.

The magpie hopped out, had a quick look around, and then flew up into the air in a flurry of feathers. Hannah watched open mouthed with amazement as Martha circled around then landed on a nearby stall. The sign above the stall said "The Treasure Trove" and sold all kinds of jewels and lovely things. Hannah tried to contain her excitement. "Wow! How much does she cost?"

"Ten gold coins, my dear. It's a bargain!" The woman reached up and Martha jumped back into her cage.

Unsure of what to do, Hannah bit her lip. She only had ten coins and she needed to buy food. On the other hand, when the magic magpie found lots of gold and jewels, she could buy all the food they could ever eat.

"I'll take her!" Hannah handed over her coins and skipped home with a bird in a cage.



CHAPTER 2

Following the Trail



hen she got home, Jacob was waiting eagerly at the door. He frowned when he saw that she wasn't carrying any packages.

"Where is the food? Didn't we earn enough?" Jacob asked.

"I bought us something better!" Hannah held up the cage and showed her brother the magpie.

"A bird! You bought us a pet!" Jacob yelled.

"She's a magic magpie. Watch!" Hannah put the cage on the ground like the old woman had but Jacob wasn't watching. He'd stormed back inside the house and slammed the door.

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Hannah turned around just as Martha flew into the air, just like before. This time though the magpie seemed to be leading her up the hill and towards the next valley.

"I'll show him!" Hannah huffed and started to run in the direction that Martha was showing her.

So Hannah followed the magic magpie, up the hill, through the meadow, across the old bridge and after an hour or more, she came to the edge of the woods.

There, hidden in the trees, was a huge wooden house, with Martha the magic magpie proudly sitting on top.



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"Hello?" Hannah called.

No one answered. She knocked loudly, but no one came. She pushed against the large wooden door and found it unlocked. It was really heavy at first but gradually it opened with a loud creak and so she tiptoed inside.

She nearly screamed with delight as she saw sparkling in the corner of the room a huge pile of rubies and emeralds, along with sacks and sacks filled with enormous chunks of gold.

Delighted, Hannah stuffed her pockets full of gems and tied a satchel on her back. It was so full of gold she couldn't even lift it! So she gathered all she could carry and staggered out the door, back in the direction from which she had come. She was so excited that she didn't even think about Martha.



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Night had fallen by the time she'd returned.

"Where have you been?" Jacob asked when she came through the door. "I was worried sick!"

Hannah plopped the contents of her pockets onto the kitchen table. Jacob's eyes opened wide. When Hannah pulled out the chunk of gold, Jacob gasped.

"Where did you get all of this?" he asked.

"The magic magpie led me to it," Hannah replied. "There was too much for me to carry!"

"Then let's go back for more!" Jacob grabbed an empty basket from a hook on the wall.

Hannah suddenly remembered Martha, but she was nowhere to be seen.



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“I don’t think we can. The magpie is gone! I almost got lost on the way home, so I don’t think I could find the place again.”

Jacob and Hannah went to bed that night wishing they’d been able to gather more treasure, but happy about their wealth. They wouldn’t need to work another day of their lives.



Early the next day, they went to the market and bought everything they’d ever dreamed of with the gold. Hannah bought seeds for roses and lilies; Jacob bought a fine set of new clothes. After an exhausting day spending their new found wealth, they returned home.

Unfortunately, they’d forgotten all about the magpie.

Martha hadn’t followed Hannah home. She’d stayed on top of the enormous house, pointing at the mound of treasure that was left behind. When the owner of the jewels came home that night, the magic magpie started working for him. It flew around and started in the direction of Hannah and Jacob’s farm.