

LEARNING  
*The  
Financial  
Fairy Tales*  
BEFORE EARNING

# The Magic Magpie



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*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.

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## CHAPTER 1

# The Vegetable Farm

**J**n 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 Magic Magpie



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.





## CHAPTER 3

# Giant Trouble!

**J**n the morning, Hannah woke up to an earthquake. Everything in her room was shaking. When the quaking stopped, she heard Jacob cry out and ran to find him. But he wasn't inside the house.

"Hannah!" Jacob yelled from outside.

She ran into the living room and saw the smashed window. The treasure was gone!

Jacob screamed louder.

Hannah rushed out the door and then froze with fear. A huge scary giant had gathered up the remaining treasure. Worse, he held her brother by his ankle upside down!

"Where is the rest of my treasure?" the giant demanded.

"I'm sorry! I didn't know it was yours!" Hannah wanted to cry.

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The giant pointed accusingly at her. “You think treasure just lies around? You didn’t stop to think it belonged to somebody? That treasure was my life savings, from years of hard work!” The giant roared and Jacob screamed.

Hannah trembled all over. She was too scared to talk. But when Jacob screamed again, she admitted that she had spent some of it.

“The giant yelled, “How dare you?”

Hannah really did start crying then.

“You owe me one hundred golden coins for the treasure you’ve already spent,” the giant said. “You have until the end of summer to pay me back, or else.”

With that, the giant stomped off up the hill, taking Jacob with him.

Hannah fell to her knees. She didn’t know what to do. She dug her hands into the soil at her feet, holding on until the earth stopped quaking from the giants’ footsteps.

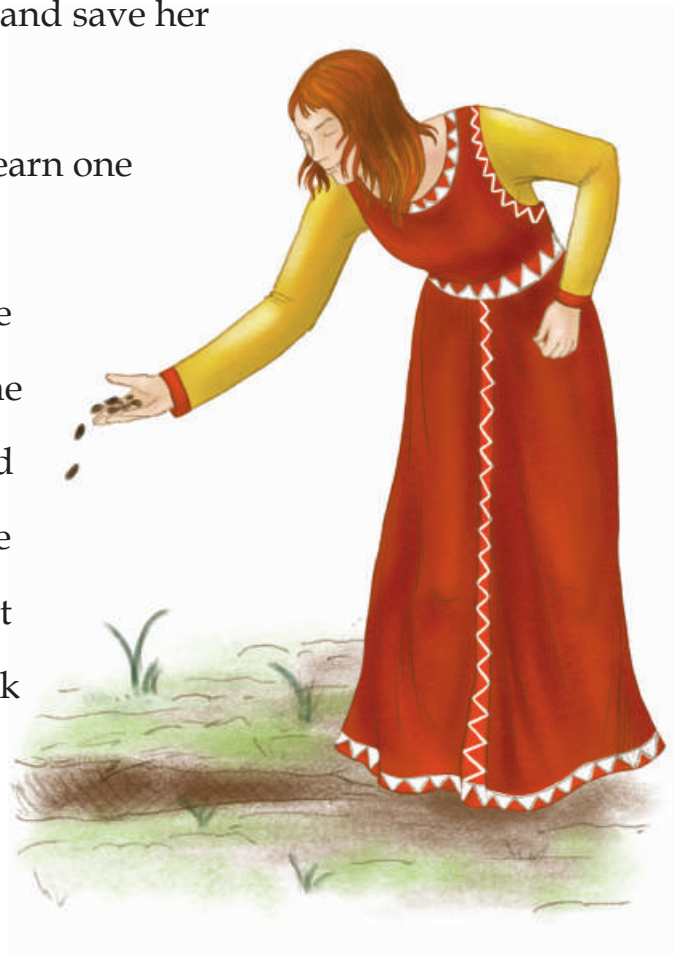
When he was gone, Hannah was able to stop crying. She had to think. What could she do? How could she earn one hundred gold coins

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and save her brother? She tried really hard to think of the ways to make some money. Would she have to sell the farm? But where would they live? Could she borrow it from a friend? But then who did they know who had a hundred gold coins spare to lend them?

After a while she began to have an idea. The only way she knew how she could repay the giant and save her brother was to work in the fields, but how could she earn one hundred coins in just a few months?

All of a sudden, she remembered the watermelon contest and the seeds that she had placed in her pocket. Hannah dashed inside to search her laundry. Luckily, the packet of seeds was still there. She didn't waste any time, she grabbed her pitchfork and headed outside to turn the soil and plant the seeds.



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Every day for the rest of the summer Hannah tended the watermelons. She made sure the soil was fresh and they had enough water. Hannah got up early and stayed up late, making sure her watermelons were the very best they could be. She'd never worked so hard for anything but she knew she had to succeed. Her efforts were rewarded.

By the last week of summer, Hannah had grown a watermelon so big that she couldn't pick it up. She didn't even know how she was going to take it into town and enter it in the contest.

She tried to lift it many different ways but to no avail. She wore herself out with her efforts. Then, just as she was about to give up, the ground began to thump and quake. The giant was coming back.

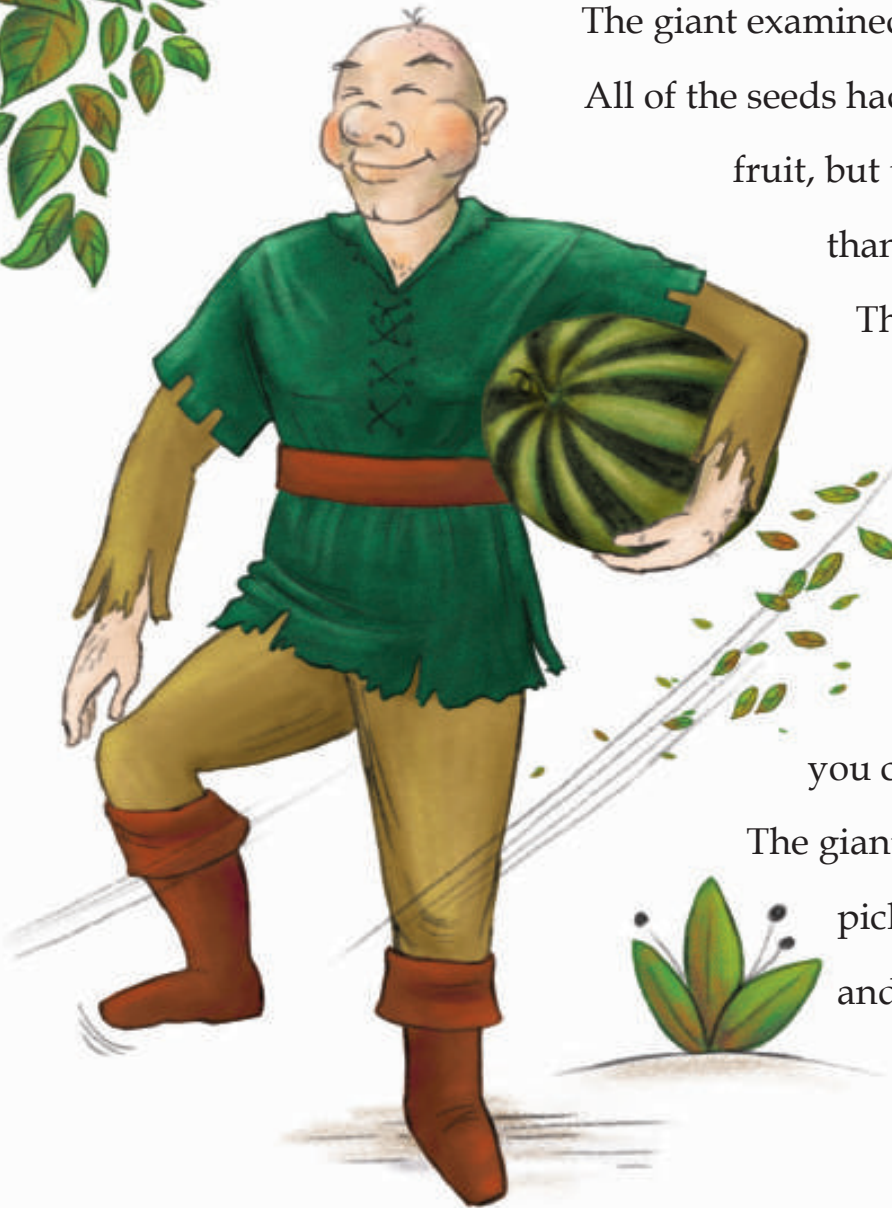
"Where is my money?" He demanded.

"I almost have it, but I need your help" Hannah explained.

"Help you? Why should I help you!" he bellowed.

"If this watermelon wins the contest in town, I'll win one hundred gold coins." Hannah dropped to her knees to beg the giant's help. "I've worked so hard all summer. I know this will win. I can't even lift it!"

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The giant examined her watermelon garden.  
All of the seeds had sprouted into enormous  
fruit, but the largest was bigger  
than anything he'd ever seen.

The giant was impressed.  
He licked his lips,  
watermelons were his  
favourite food.

“If you help me  
take it to the market,  
you can win your gold.”

The giant agreed. He effortlessly  
picked up the watermelon  
and walked it into town.



## CHAPTER 4

# The Watermelon Contest

**T**hat afternoon, at the contest, Hannah's watermelon won by a landslide. No other came close to the size of hers. The townspeople were also impressed by the size of the giant, though admittedly they were a little scared as well. When they cheered for him however, the giant smiled.

Hannah approached him cautiously. "Now you have the gold. Will you let my brother go?" The giant led Hannah to his house where Jacob ran, smiling, into her arms.

"Did he treat you cruelly?" Hannah asked.

"Of course not! Walter is really friendly," Jacob explained.

"His name is Walter?"

"Yep, and he showed me how to mine jewels! Look what I found, all on my own!" Jacob held a beautiful diamond in his hand. "It's hard work, but it pays off!" he laughed.



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“Ahem,” Walter said, “speaking of hard work, I’m a little hungry after all the excitement in town, how much would you like for that watermelon?”

Hannah shook her head. “You can have it as a present.”

Walter smiled. “Thank you! No-one has ever given me a present before,” he said, not looking at all scary now.

Walter took his watermelon inside and the three new friends feasted on it. Hannah noticed that Martha the magic magpie was on a perch in the house, looking much happier living out of her cage.

“That magpie caused so much trouble,” she scowled.

“No,” corrected Jacob, “being greedy caused us so much trouble! But we have found a good use for her.” Jacob and Walter smiled at each other.

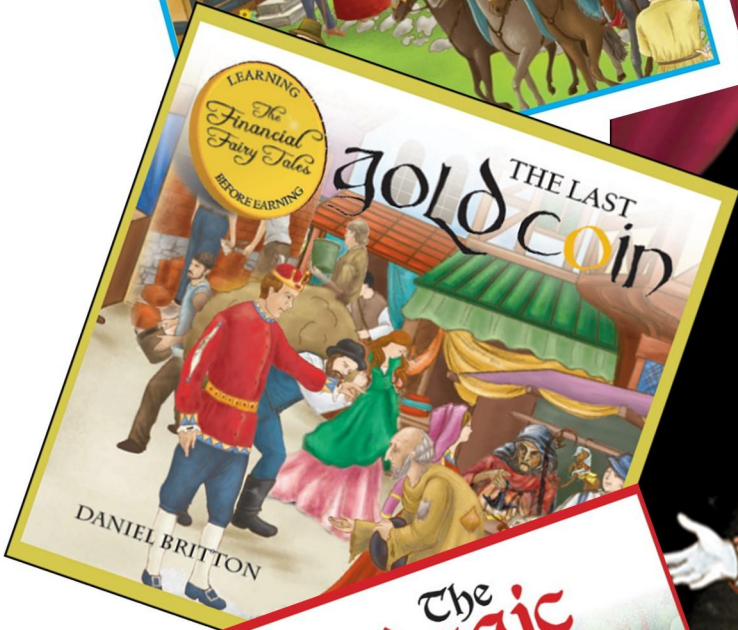
From that day on, Jacob, Hannah, Walter and Martha all worked together. Hannah and Martha would find the treasure, while Jacob and Walter would dig it up. While on the farm, Walter because of his size and strength was a great help with all the heavy work. Together they were a great team.

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In no time at all, they had so much money that they decided to put it to good use. With their new found wealth they paid for a new school for the town and helped lots of people who were in need.

In the evening, after enjoying their day's work, they would often relax in Hannah's beautiful flower garden and watch the sunset while eating watermelon. After all it was Walter's favourite. 🌻





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## ACTIVITY BOOK

