The Money Tree

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A woman finds money does grow on trees.

Published on
Booksie

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The Money Tree

The woman had been married to her husband for going on thirty years. He was very lazy and lay around on the davenport most of the day drinking copious amounts of beer. The woman did wash for people in order to keep their small rat infested home, which she considered better than not having a roof over her head at all. Surprisingly she still loved the man even though their physical love had died long ago.

One day as she hung out a load of wash she noticed a small tree growing in the area where there had once been an outhouse. It was a lovely little tree covered in pink blossoms. The woman didn't have any pets or plants because her husband forbade them so she decided to adopt this little sapling as her own. Every day she watered it and she put fresh straw around it's base to ward off the growth of weeds. The tree grew surprisingly fast reaching the height of her head by mid-summer. One day as she was watering her tree a leaf got knocked off. The woman cursed herself for her carelessness and picked up the little leaf, which instantly became a one-dollar bill! The woman dropped the bill and screamed out in surprise. Her husband, as could be expected, didn't ask after her to see if she had been in an accident or otherwise injured. Slowly the woman bent down to examine her find. Yes, it looked real, but was it. Had she lost her senses? Gingerly she reached down and picked up the leaf turned money. A money tree? Her mother had often spoken of such a thing but it was always in jest. The woman reached up inside the tree and pulled a leaf and instantly it became a five-dollar bill. Again and again she pulled leaves from different parts of the tree and each time a different denomination would appear from different parts of the tree. Before she knew it she had several hundred dollars in her hands. Was it legal currency she wondered? There was only one way to find out. She hurriedly ran to the house and put on her Sunday go meeting clothes and, tucking one of the one dollar bills into her purse she headed for the door. The man lying on the davenport asked lazily, "Where you goin'?"

The woman didn't stop to answer. She rushed to the car and headed for the bank. Once there she tried to compose herself. After all money didn't really grow on trees it was probably some strange facsimile of money. After entering the bank she rushed to a teller. "I was given this one dollar note and I believe it is counterfeit, can you check it out for me?" she explained.

The teller took the dollar and said, "Of course ma'am. I'd be glad to." Minutes passed slowly as the woman waited for the teller's verdict. Much to the woman's relief the teller came back with a smile. "It's real ma'am. You haven't been given a counterfeit dollar." She handed the dollar back to the woman.

The woman felt her mood lift for the first time in a long time. They had an honest to God money tree growing in their own backyard. Immediately the woman realized the tree must be kept secret or it would be stolen and her prize would be no more. She hurried home and picked enough money to pay the rent and all the utilities and no more. She didn't want to over tax the tree by taking away too many of it's leaves. Every time she pulled a certain needed denomination it turned into the bill she needed to pay the bills. Soon she began making a few changes around their home. While the man lie on the davenport he watched with astonishment as all the windows were replaced. When asked where the money had come from the woman replied honestly, "Why I get it from our money tree Honey!" Of course he never believed her.

In the fall the money tree began to lose it's foliage on the ground and as it did it turned to money. The woman went out twice a day with a rake and raked in the dough so to speak. She saved it in big plastic bags, just as you would any other type of leaf; only she hid these bags in the shed that stood beside the tree. The woman estimated that she had enough money saved up to replace the siding on the house as well as pay all their bills through the winter. The woman still did laundry for people to keep the talk down and when asked by neighbors where the money came from to fix up her house she would answer, "Well either money grows on trees or my Great Aunt died. Take your pick."

In the spring the tree was again covered with brightly colored blossoms. The woman very carefully

mulches about the roots of the tree and places fencing around it so that it may be safe from the dog next door that liked to dig in their yard.

One bright summer day the owner of the dog next door was quickly retrieving his mutt from his neighbors yard when he heard the lady of the house out by the shed humming a little tune. She seemed engrossed in something and as the man snuck around the back of the shed he was astounded by what he saw. The woman was picking leaves off a small tree, which instantly turned to money! So astonished was he that he dropped his dog who rushed immediately to the base of the fence surrounding the tree and lifted his leg. The women used her apron to shoo him away and spied the dog's owner watching her with astonishment on his face. "Hello neighbor!" She feigned as though all was normal about what she was doing.

"My God," said her neighbor, "A real honest to God money tree!" Upon finishing his sentence he turned and ran toward his home his dog hot on his heels.

The woman was beside herself. Now it would be all over the town and probably on the television news as well that she had a money tree. Someone was bound to come and cut it down for his or her own use. The woman began to cry as she gently stroked the bark of her tree.

The man ran home and without saying a word to his wife he called his best friend who called his best friend and so on until the entire town was awash in gossip over the money tree. The woman began to receive calls from reporters who wished to confirm, laughingly, about her boon which she strictly denied saying, "After all, money doesn't grow on trees!" Then she would giggle hysterically feeling closed in on all sides.

One day a procession, led by the neighbor, made their way up the alley to where the tree stood. The woman hurriedly ran to her tree and begged the people to leave her alone. The neighbor raised his hand for silence. Then with the authority of one who knows, he began to speak. "I saw this woman picking money from this tree just three days ago." He reached up and gingerly plucked off a large green leaf from the tree and was astounded when nothing happened. The crowd became restless as the man pulled leaf after leaf from the tree until the woman made him stop. "It's her!" He exclaimed. "It only works for her!"

The woman felt trapped. She knew the tree would produce money for her, hadn't it for three summers? The man grasped her arm and forced her to pluck a leaf off the money tree but nothing happened. The neighbor looked into the teary eyes of the woman with astonishment.

The crowd began to laugh at the neighbor. I mean after all, money really doesn't grow on trees.

Or does it?

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