

Management General Presents

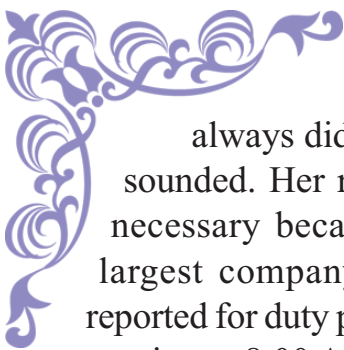


**A Fiscal Fairy Tale**

*By Tom Brown*

Henny Money was always adept at earning a good income. From the age of six onward, she had a real knack for finding things that people needed to have done, things for which people paid her handsomely. With jobs dependable, her work more than acceptable, and compensation extremely generous, Henny didn't have a care in the world — until that terrible Monday.

***Henny Money***



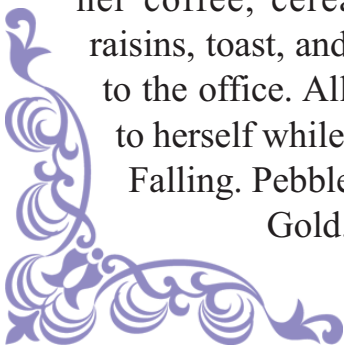
Henny woke up, as she always did, just as her clock radio sounded. Her regular early rising was necessary because she worked at the largest company in the kingdom and reported for duty promptly every weekday morning at 8:00 A.M.

Dressed in her favorite terrycloth bathrobe, Henny walked down her front pathway to the curb, where she bent down to pick up the morning newspaper. The sun was shining; pearls of dew punctuated the grass lawn; a goldfinch was warbling the happiest of songs. All was just as it should have been — until Henny started up the stairs to her porch.

Just before she cleared the steps, a pebble rolled from the porch roof and thumped her on the head. Surprised and startled (and smarting from the bop), Henny was astounded when she bent over and picked up the object. It was small; but it was also shiny, smooth, and elongated — so much so that it almost looked like a tiny egg. And its color was distinctly *gold*. For a pebble, it seemed quite heavy.

“Oh, no,” she thought to herself. “This is no ordinary rock. Something like this has never happened to me before. Hmmm... This pebble is so golden: maybe this is, could this be... a... a... sign?”

With this thought in mind, Henny gulped her coffee, cereal mixed with golden raisins, toast, and orange juice and raced to the office. All the way, she mumbled to herself while driving, “Pebble. Gold. Falling. Pebble. Gold. Falling. Pebble. Gold. Falling.” Then, as she braked for a stop upon



seeing an amber signal light, she hollered out while slapping her forehead: “Gold falling! That’s it!”

The passengers in the cars to her left and right immediately looked at her; but since her shrieks had little to do with traffic conditions, they sped off as the light turned green.

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*She pulled her good friend,  
Inny Vinny, out of a meeting  
with her staff.*

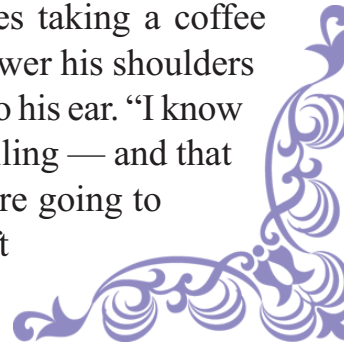
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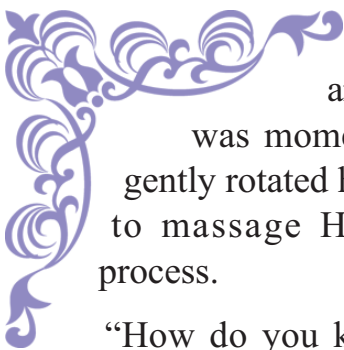
Once in the office, Henny was preoccupied with the revelation she had had in her car. In fact, she could not stop talking about what had happened to her that morning.

She pulled her good friend, Inny Vinny, out of a meeting with her staff. “Inny, you manage all our research and development. Watch out! Gold is falling and that can only mean that your departmental stream of profitable inventions will somehow be affected. Watch out!”

Inny, completely taken aback, simply shook her head sideways in disagreement and then shuffled Henny out the door. “Henny, I’ve got to get back to my meeting. Get real, please!”

Henny, however, would not be deterred. When she saw Sal Sales taking a coffee break, she got him to lower his shoulders so she could whisper into his ear. “I know for a fact that gold is falling — and that can only mean that we’re going to be losing customers left





and right! Be careful.” Sal was momentarily speechless. He gently rotated his finger in his ear as if to massage Henny’s words in the process.

“How do you know this, Henny?” he asked. “I have a special source, but, trust me, it’s rock solid.” Sal stroked his chin for a minute, looking over Henny’s head down the empty hallway. “Henny, I think you better check the numbers on this. My sense

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*Unannounced, she marched right into Paula People’s office, the central location for all personnel matters.*

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is that we’re going to have our best sales month ever. Come back if you have factual details for us to discuss.”

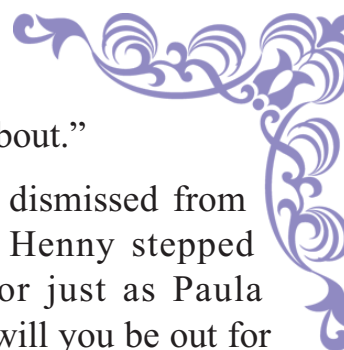
Henny, brushed off twice, was even more determined to have someone treat her premonition with the gravity she felt it deserved. Unannounced, she marched right into Paula People’s office, the central location for all personnel matters. “Paula, aren’t you worried? Gold will be falling soon, and that can only mean a huge rash of layoffs!”

Paula fixed her eyes on Henny’s frightened face. “Now, Henny, let’s not start rumors. We’ve not had any big reductions in workforce for... for... for two-and-a-half months. Calm yourself.

You’re right to be concerned, but



there’s absolutely nothing to be worried about.”

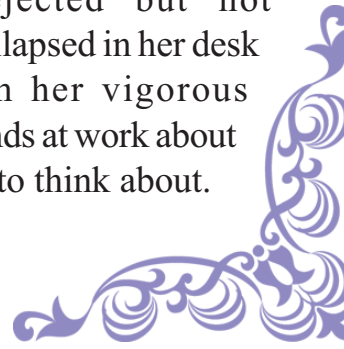


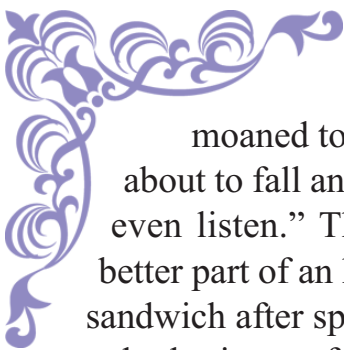
Feeling more or less dismissed from further conversation, Henny stepped backward out the door just as Paula queried. “Hey, Henny, will you be out for softball tonight with the company team?” Henny, however, did not respond; she was too set on having *someone* heed her warnings! “I must tell my supervisor; she’ll listen. She will listen!”

“Sue Visor!” Henny yelled, just before her boss started down the stairs to the parking lot, “I must talk with you!” Sue was in a frenzy, late for a big meeting at company headquarters. But Henny was a good employee; so Sue made time. “Sue, I learned this morning that gold will soon be falling. We’re all going to be facing salary cuts, plant closings, or ... or ... worse! You’ve got to prepare people for this.”

Sue, who didn’t normally speak without thinking or use choppy sentences, tried to frame some coherent response. “Gold. People. Falling! Television news. You can’t. Falling, what falling? People say anything on TV. Gold. You know, to get attention. Hey, you’re one of... Nothing’s falling. You’re a good employee. Hey, chill! Must get going. Sorry. See you...” At the base of the stairs, looking up at a most-confused Henny, Sue shouted, “Later!”

Henny, feeling rejected but not necessarily dejected, collapsed in her desk chair, worn out from her vigorous attempts to alert her friends at work about the doom she trembled to think about.





“Good grief,” she moaned to herself. “The sky’s just about to fall and all these people won’t even listen.” Then she moped for the better part of an hour, and munched on a sandwich after spreading golden mustard on both pieces of light brown bread. She could not come up with another list of people to talk to, nor could she devise any other way to communicate her fearful message. “I could call up our company president,” she said, sparking some enthusiasm at the prospect. But her smile soon turned into a frown. “Ahhhh, he’d never take a call from me.”

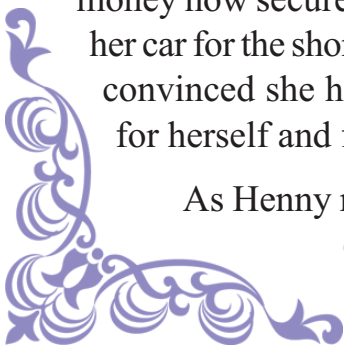
As much as Henny tried to work on pressing tasks, she could not stop shaking. She possessed such ominous foresight and was unable to find even *one* person who would heed her. Just before quitting time, out of loneliness as much as anything, she called her stockbroker.

“Good afternoon, Mr. Bonds,” she said on the telephone, trying to sound as pleasant as she could. “Can you transfer all my investments immediately into cash? You can? Then will you?”

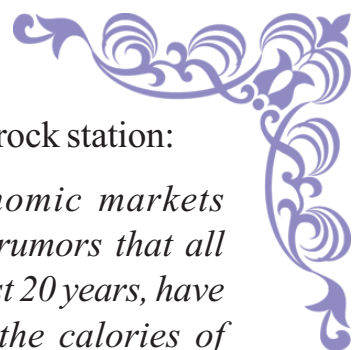
“You have? *Just like that?* So, I’m no longer invested — in anything? Yes, that’s exactly what I asked you to do!

“Well, then, thank you, Mr. Bonds.” Nothing else transpired between them in their brief conversation. Henny’s own money now secure as cash, Henny got into her car for the short drive home, personally convinced she had done what she could for herself and for her work friends.

As Henny rounded her home street corner, a radio news



bulletin interrupted the rhythms on her favorite rock station:



*The world’s economic markets collapsed today on rumors that all diet drinks, for the last 20 years, have actually had twice the calories of normal soft drinks.*

*Every industry in the world was rocked by investor panic triggered by this as-yet unconfirmed rumor. At the close of business today, the typical stock portfolio was worth barely half the value it had just this morning.*

*The King, in his only official statement, said that it may take months to check out the diet-riot rumor.*

As Henny pulled into her driveway, a bluebird lighted on the porch roof, just above the front door to her house.



**The End**

Illustration and layout by Mac Thornton

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