

DAZED FABLES

A FAIRY TALE OR A TALE OF A TOWN?

Once upon a time, there was a farmer (note, I am using farmer as a generic term rather than rancher simply because it sounds better than Mr. Rancher). His name was Mr. Farmer. Now, Mr. Farmer was known far and wide for raising some of the best beef cattle around. One day, Mr. Farmer stopped in one of his favorite haunts "The Local Restaurant Where Local Farmers and Workers Hang OUT" (henceforth to be know as TLRWLFWHO). While he was there, he overheard some people talking about the new railroad coming through town and how it would affect how they work their farms. One of them asked Mr. Farmer how he was going to change to accommodate the new railroad. Mr. Farmer's response: "I'll do things the way I've always done things. It has always worked out just fine."

The railroad tracks came right through Mr. Farmer's land. Mr. Farmer noticed that his herd size was falling off quite a bit. He couldn't figure out why, after all, he hadn't changed a thing. He was still running his cattle operation the same way he always had.

Some time later, Mr. Farmer was back in the TLRWLFWHO. He noticed that the special of the day was steak, at half price!! My goodness, he thought to himself, the price of beef must really be dropping if they are selling steak at half-price. Mr. Farmer was placing his order for one of those steaks when he decided to ask Ms. Waitress about the steak special.

Ms. Waitress told him the following: "Well, since the railroad came through all that farmland, some idiot didn't pay attention and put up new fencing to protect his cattle. Whenever the train hits one of those cows, they stop and let the workers pick up the carcass. Those railroad workers are eating mighty high on the cow these days! Since, those workers come in here all the time, we can hardly give beef away! Now, they buy pork and chicken, but no beef. I sure wish somebody would put up a fence to protect those cows because it is hurting our business to where I might lose my job! But, enough about my problems, how is your farm doing these days, Mr. Farmer?"

"We're doing things just like we always have and getting by. Not producing as much as we use to, but since I haven't changed anything, it'll get better" replied Mr. Farmer as he stirred some sugar in his coffee.

PART II: In the Town of Christiansburg, Town Council members are heard saying we'll do things the way we always have..... (YOU GET TO CREATE THE REST OF THE STORY)

A STORM IS COMING (by Tony L. Anonymous)

Once upon a time... ..there was a group of people that had been selected to walk the paths of the Town to see how things were going and to help the citizens they encountered along their way.

Year after year this Merry Group stomped along the pathways, sometimes stopping to talk to their friends, but most of the time wasting no time to ask others about what was going on off the path or what laid ahead. They had walked the path so often it couldn't be any different, could it? Every few years they would stop and put a stone back in its place if it became difficult to walk on the path. Sometimes they would stop to play a baseball game or take a swim in the new swimming HOLE.

Over the years, the path narrowed and got deeper from all of their stomping. All in all it was a grand life for this happy group because they didn't have to worry about things changing much. One day some citizens that they didn't RECOGNIZE shouted at them from the top of the path and told them that a terrible storm was coming down the path straight for them. The Merry Group laughed and laughed. How could these people know any better than them what was on the path ahead? After all, they had walked this path for so many years and they had never had a terrible storm take them by surprise before.

The citizens tried and tried to warn them, but to no avail. The Merry Group just waved their hands, crossed their arms and would have none of it. Suddenly, the sky darkened, lightning flashed and the winds began to howl. The rain came down in buckets. The Merry Group stood there not knowing what to do. Their precious path was becoming a river. Trees fell and blocked their way. The water rose higher and higher.

They tried to climb out of the path, but they had worn it so deep they couldn't climb out. The citizens threw them a rope, but they refused to grab it because they didn't know these people and how could they trust them? Finally the storm surged

and a huge wall of water came barreling down the path. The Merry Group was swept away in one fell swoop and were never seen again.

What an awful May day that was for them.

HORRIBLE HANNAH – ENTREPRENEUR

Horrible Hannah was out riding across the prairie one day when she noticed a huge swirling cloud of dust moving across the plains. It was a frightening sight. Now, Hannah knew there was a new town being built up ahead a ways, and without a thought, nudged her horse from a easy trot to a full out run, racing straight for that town.

Hannah reached town and jumped from her saddle before her horse came to a stop....she ran over to the builders of the Town and started shouting "A storm is coming! A storm is coming! Run for your lives".

The people building the town just shook their heads and went back to work. A couple of men came over to Hannah and told her that she needed to just ride right on outta there because they had a town to build before the storm hit! Hannah tried her best to convince them they needed to secure what they already had instead of trying to keep expanding, but they'd have nothing of it.

<

Hannah tried to get them to change their minds, but having no luck at that, she did the next best thing. She raced off to another town that was out of the way of the storm. She went in to see the wagon maker since he was the closest thing to a good woodwright the town had at that time. Then, she wandered over to the local saloon and ordered up a big old mug of rootbeer.

Now I'm sure a lot of you are thinking that's a pretty mild drink, but back then they didn't have ice or air conditioners. Have you ever slugged down a room temperature rootbeer when the room temperature is close to a hundred? I'm telling ya! That's just how tough old Hannah was. Along with being tough Hannah was also pretty smart....as you're about to see.

Hannah stayed there until that storm had done run itself off into the distance, well past the town she tried to warn. Then, she went over to the wagon maker, rented a wagon and loaded up her order. Then, she went to the General Store and picked up a few other

items she knew she would need. Hannah loaded up everything and went right back over to the town that had been in the path of the storm.

Coming up on what use to be a town, she slowed the wagon and surveyed the damage, noting that all of the people were gone. "If they'd just spent half as much time trying to take care of what they already had as they did to trying to make the town bigger, there might have been something left other than that big old pile of splintered wood.

Climbing out of the wagon, Hannah pulled out her tools and set to work. After a couple of hours, she dusted off her hands and looked at the finished project. There, in the center of that pile of splinters was a brand new sign. It said "**Hannah's Quality Toothpicks**".

An Apple-ing Story (by Tony L. Anonymous)

Once upon a time... .. there was a little apple seed. This little seed came from a long line of apples that had always produced the best tasting fruit in all the land. For many years the Farmer had watered and carefully watched the apple trees that produced this little apple seed. This farmer had cultivated apples for a long time and he knew that this little seed and his brothers and sisters were very special. The farmer decided he would share his special seeds with a neighbor so she could also enjoy the delicious apples when they grew.

The neighbor took the seeds gladly and carefully planted them in the rich soil. Each day she would water the seeds and fertilize the soil, so the little seeds would make many more apples for her neighbors to enjoy. The seeds were warmed by the spring sun and drank the spring rains. They began to grow and soon were growing leaves and flowers. The Farmer's neighbor kept a close eye on the apple seeds that had now grown into strong new trees. She kept the animals away and pulled the weeds out that were stealing the little trees' sunlight and water. Before long little apples started to grow and turn red in the summer sun. She shared her bountiful crop with all her neighbors.

One day a town tax collector came by and noticed the beautiful apples and asked if he could have some of them to eat. His neighbor gladly shared the apples with her fellow neighbor as the Farmer had done for her and told him to save some of the seeds for the Spring planting. The tax collector greedily ate all the apples and didn't save a single seed for the next Spring. After a while, he became so hungry for more apples he went back to ask for more. The good neighbor told him that there were only a few apples left and they were being saved for next year's planting.

The tax collector would have none of this and decided that if his neighbor wouldn't give him the apples, he would force her to do it. After all he was the biggest guy in the Town and he had to have the apples! He arose the next day and marched down to the good neighbor's garden, determined to get those apples. The good neighbor again told him that these were all that were left and if she didn't save them, there would be no more chance of making even more apples next year.

The tax collector didn't care. He said that if she didn't give him the apples, he would make her regret it. She fought and fought with the tax collector to protect the future crops. How could he not see that no one would get to enjoy the fruits of the next crop if he took the remaining apples? Finally, the greedy tax collector took the apples and went home to eat them all up. He had a grand meal and after he finished, he realized he wanted more.

He went back to make sure the good neighbor wasn't hiding any of the apples for herself, but she had none to take. The tax collector decided that since she didn't have any more apples, he

would just take the trees. He told the Town's leaders that he could do a much better job of growing the apple trees. After all how could the good neighbor know more than he did about what was good for the Town? He told them that he knew more about apple trees than she did and he could just take them back to his house and plant the trees himself.

The next day he came by the good neighbor's house and yanked the apple trees right up out of the ground and carried them off. The good neighbor tried to stop him, but he threatened to come back and take her land if she got in the way. Of course he was the lazy sort, so he didn't PLAN to replant them until the next day. Late in the afternoon of the next day, he went to plant the trees only to see that they had withered and died. Being the quick thinker he was, he decided he would go back to the Town leaders and tell them that the trees must have been defective and asked them to let him get the Farmer's trees instead. Trouble was that the Farmer didn't live in the Town. The quick thinking tax collector said, "that's not a problem, let's just make the Farmer's land a part of our Town and then we can take what we want to eat and sell the rest to the other town people." The leaders and town people went along with it because they wanted those delicious apples for themselves.

After a long battle with the Town, the Farmer's land was annexed into the Town's limits and the tax collector came to collect the apple trees. Each year the tax collector came back and took more and more of the trees, because he couldn't get them to bear fruit. In fact most of them were dying because their roots were torn from the ground. The Farmer must have tricked him into taking the bad trees. Eventually, the trees were all gone and so were the delicious apples. The Town became known for its awful treatment of the Farmer and his neighbor and the tax collector blamed the Farmer and his neighbors for all the bad things that were happening to the Town. Soon, the Town began to wither and die just like the apple trees.

Moral of the story: Take the fruit given to you freely and PLAN for your own future. Don't try to steal someone else's.