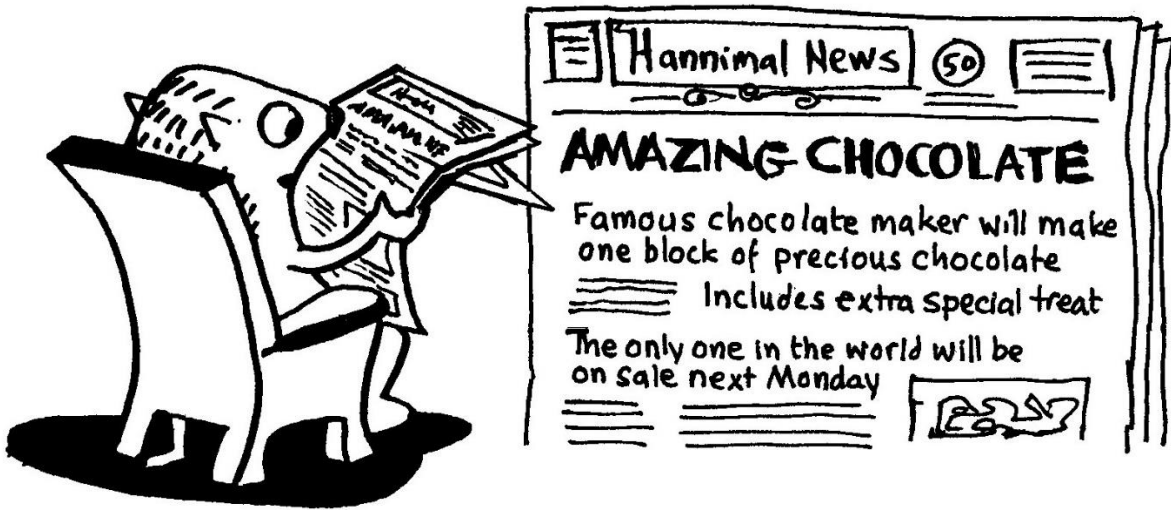


Story 12. Precious Chocolate

It was a sunny morning. Wombrat sat down in his living room, picked up the paper and started to read. A moment later he shouted, "I must have it. I must, I must I must. No matter what it costs, I must have it."

This is what Wombrat read



Wombrat jumped to his feet and danced around shouting, "Yes. Yes. Yes. I will buy it. On Monday it will be mine— mine – mine."

When he turned the page, he saw how much the precious chocolate would cost. One hundred dollars. "I don't have one hundred dollars. I don't have five dollars," he said as he slumped sadly back into his chair.

As he sat, many thoughts went through his head. "One hundred dollars. One hundred dollars for just one block of chocolate. I'd eat it as soon as I bought it. Then it would be gone. My hundred dollars would be gone. The chocolate would be gone. Wonder what it tastes like? Wonder what the extra special treat is? The only one in the world! I'd be famous. What can I do? I could sell all my chocolate to buy it. But then I'd only have one block of chocolate. And when I ate it, I'd have none. All of my secret food cupboards would be empty. What will I do?"

He walked around in circles – confused. "What will I do?"

Wombrat went to his secret food cupboards thinking - "I could sell each of my chocolate blocks for one dollar. So I'd have to sell one hundred blocks. I wonder how many I'd have left over."

Wombrat took out all his chocolate bars and laid them neatly on the table. There were big ones, small ones, plain ones and cream ones. But how many were there? He began to count.

"One -- two -- three," he counted, picking up each block and looking at it lovingly as he counted. "Twenty five – twenty six -- twenty seven," he felt hungry as the smell of chocolate filled the room but he continued to count. "Seventy seven – seventy eight. I wonder what the secret treat is?"

“Eighty five – eighty six. I wonder how many I will have left? Ninety one -- ninety two.” Wombrat looked at the table. They were nearly all counted. “Ninety eight -- ninety nine,” and as he placed the last bar of chocolate on the pile, “One hundred. None left. Exactly one hundred.”

Wombrat started to cry, “If I sell them, I’ll have none. No chocolate to eat until I buy the amazing chocolate. But then, when I eat it – and that won’t take long, I’ll have no chocolate left. No chocolate, no money – nothing.”

“Would it be worthwhile?” he asked himself as he wiped his eyes with his handkerchief.

That night, he did not sleep. He had a decision to make. Does he sell all that he has to buy one very amazing block of precious chocolate or does he keep his one hundred blocks? What would you do?

When Wombrat was thinking, he would eat chocolate. That made his brain work better. “But I can’t eat any. I need one hundred dollars so I need one hundred blocks of chocolate. What will I do? If only I knew what the special treat was.”

Wombrat had another sleepless night but when he got up in the morning he had made up his mind. “I want that precious chocolate so I have to sell all that I have.”

That afternoon he went from house to house selling his chocolate. The animals were very surprised that Wombrat was selling chocolate. Usually he’s buying it. As night approached he had ten blocks left. As the stars started to twinkle in the sky, Wombrat sold the last block to Happypotamus. He tucked the money away in his pouch and wandered home.

Again that night he couldn’t sleep. He wandered from room to room looking at each secret food cupboard. They were unlocked. They were empty. “All empty. But tomorrow I will buy the precious chocolate and I will lock it away. I will use the smallest secret food cupboard but I will use the biggest lock I have.”

On Monday morning, Wombrat rushed to the shop early and bought the block of precious chocolate. He felt really proud as he handed over his money and took hold of the precious chocolate. Many animals were watching. They cheered and said, “Lucky Wombrat. He owns the precious chocolate.” But then they whispered, “You can be sure Wombrat won’t share it - he’ll eat it all tonight.”

That night, with the precious chocolate safely locked away, Wombrat again did not sleep. “It won’t last long,” he thought. “Then I will have nothing. I wonder what the special treat is? It doesn’t say anything on the wrapping.”

All of the next day he sat and stared at the precious chocolate. “I wonder what the special treat is?”

After dinner Wombrat decided, “Before I go to bed, I’m going to cut the precious chocolate in half. I’ll keep half and eat half. Every day I’ll eat half of what’s left. And there will always be half left for tomorrow. That way the precious chocolate will never run out.”

The taste of the chocolate was amazing. Delicious. Exquisite. Fabulous. Unbelievable. Awesome. Amazing. Lovingly he locked the remaining half securely away in the secret food cupboard, put on the big lock and hid the key.

Next morning he took the large key from its hiding place, ran to the secret food cupboard and opened the door. There to his surprise, there was the whole block of precious chocolate - neatly wrapped the same as when he bought it. "Perhaps that's the treat," he said excitedly.

That night he ate half once more. He locked the half away before going to bed. Next morning, sure enough – the whole block was there again. Amazing! "That's what the secret treat is," he squealed.

Wombrat ran to the phone and called his friends, Happypotamus, Cupine, Geelaugh, Dog and Crocosmile. "Come to my house tonight. I want you to taste my precious chocolate."

"What has changed Wombrat? Why is he being so friendly?" they asked each other as they knocked timidly on the door.

"Come in, come in," smiled Wombrat. "I have cut you each a small piece of precious chocolate – but I'll still have some left over for when you come again tomorrow."

They all sat around Wombrat's table and nibbled on their tiny piece of precious chocolate. It was only a small piece but they all exclaimed – delicious, exquisite, awesome, amazing. The taste was truly amazing but what was more amazing was how Wombrat had changed.

"Same time, same place tomorrow," grinned Wombrat as he politely showed them out of his house.

"I'm so happy that I bought the precious chocolate," said generous Wombrat as he locked the half piece that was left in his secret food cupboard."

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Source Notes and Discussion

Story 12. Precious Chocolate

Parable of the Pearl of Great Price: Matthew 13: 45 - 46

It is fitting that stories with happy endings end with the happiest ending of all. Wombrat sells all that he has to gain something even more precious – and he is transformed in the process. As in the previous story, a risk was taken but the reward was immense. Wombrat's 'eternal chocolate' might be considered analogous to 'never thirsting again.' Contrast with story 5. In that story he 'got everything and ended up with nothing'. In this story he 'sold everything and ended up with a more precious treasure'.