

*Mike is a person from Mars who doesn't know much about Earth culture. However he inherited a huge amount of money and became a rich man. One of his friends – Jubal – was appointed his man of business. What he wants to do is to “tie up Mike's money so that struggle (for it) could not take place”. He decides to make the Secretary General (Douglas) Mike's man of business. Other friends of Mike cannot understand Jubal's decision as The Secretary General does not share Mike's views and is sooner enemy than friend. Jubal tries to explain his behaviour.*

## **Do You Want to Be Rich?**

Later, Jubal unburdened himself privately to the three officers of the *Champion*. “The financial end was simple: just tie up Mike's money so that a struggle couldn't take place. Not even if he dies, because I've told Douglas that Mike's death ends his stewardship whereas a rumor from a usually reliable source – me – has reached Kung and others that Mike's death gives Douglas permanent control. Of course, if I had magic powers, I would have stripped the boy of every penny. That –”

“Why, Jubal'?” the Captain interrupted. Harshaw stared. “Are you wealthy, Skipper? I mean *rich*.”

“*Me?*” Van Tromp snorted. “I've my salary, a pension someday, a mortgaged house – and two girls in college. I'd like to be wealthy!”

“You wouldn't like it.”

“*Huh!* You wouldn't say that if you had daughters in school.”

“I put four through college – and went in debt to my armpits.

One is a star in her profession... under her married name because I'm an old bum instead of a revered memory. The others remember my birthday and don't bother me; education didn't harm them. I mention my offspring only to prove that I know that a father often needs more than he has. But you can go with some firm that will pay you several times what you're getting just for your name on their letterhead. You've had offers?”

“That's beside the point,” Captain van Tromp answered stiffly. “I'm a professional man.”

“Meaning that money can't tempt you into giving up commanding space ships.”

“I wouldn't mind having money, too!”

“A little is no good. Daughters can spend ten percent more than a man can make in any usual occupation. That's a law of nature, to be known henceforth as ‘Harshaw's Law.’ But, Captain, *real* wealth, on the scale that calls for a battery of finaglers to hold down taxes, would ground you as certainly as resigning would.”

“Nonsense! I'd put it into bonds and just clip coupons.”

“Not if you were the type who acquires great wealth in the first place. Big money isn't hard to come by. All it costs is a lifetime of devotion. But no ballerina ever works harder. Captain, that's not your style; you don't want to make money, you simply want to *spend* money.”

“Correct, sir! So I can't see why you would want to take Mike's wealth away from him.”

“Because great wealth is a curse – unless you enjoy money-making for its own sake. Even then it has serious drawbacks.”

“Oh, piffle! Jubal, you talk like a harem guard trying to sell a whole man on the advantages of being a eunuch.”

“Possibly,” agreed Jubal. “The mind's ability to rationalize its own shortcomings is unlimited; I am no exception. Since I, like yourself, sir, have no interest in money other than to spend it, it is impossible for me to get rich. Conversely, there has never been any danger that I would fail to

scrounge the modest amount needed to feed my vices, since anyone with the savvy not to draw to a small pair can do that. But great wealth? You saw that farce. Could I have rewritten it so that I acquired the plunder – become its manager and defacto owner while milking off any income I coveted – and still have rigged it so that Douglas would have supported the outcome? Mike trusts me; I am his water brother. Could I have stolen his fortune?”

“Uh... damn you, Jubal, I suppose so.”

“A certainty. Because our Secretary General is no more a money seeker than you are. *His* drive is power – a drum whose beat I don’t hear. Had I guaranteed (oh, gracefully!) that the Smith estate would continue to bulwark his administration, then I would have been left with the boodle.”

Jubal shuddered. “I thought I was going to have to do that, to protect Mike from vultures – and I was panic-stricken. Captain, you don’t *know* what an Old Man of the Sea great wealth is. Its owner is beset on every side, like beggars in Bombay, each demanding that he invest or give away part of his wealth. He becomes suspicious – honest friendship is rarely offered him; those who could have been friends are too fastidious to be jostled by beggars, too proud to risk being mistaken for one.

“Worse yet, his family is always in danger. Captain, have your daughters ever been threatened with kidnapping?”

“What? Good Lord, no!”

“If you possessed the wealth Mike had thrust on him, you would have those girls guarded night and day – still you would not rest, because you would never be sure of the guards. Look at the last hundred or so kidnappings and note how many involved a trusted employee... and how few victims escaped alive. Is there anything money can buy which is worth having your daughters’ necks in a noose?”

Van Tromp looked thoughtful. “I’ll keep my mortgaged house, Jubal.”

“Amen. I want to live my own life, sleep in my own bed – and not be *bothered!* Yet I thought I was going to be forced to spend my last years in an office, barricaded by buffers, working long hours as Mike’s man of business.

“Then I had an inspiration. Douglas lives behind such barricades, has such a staff. Since we were surrendering the power to insure Mike’s freedom, why not make Douglas pay by assuming the headaches? I was not afraid that he would steal; only second-rate politicians are money hungry – and Douglas is no pipsqueak. Quit scowling, Ben, and hope that he never dumps the load on *you*.

(Robert Heinlein, *Stranger in a Strange Land*)