



GRANDON GILL

THREE LITTLE PIGS (A)¹

"Poor dumb porkers", Charlene the pig muttered under her breath as she surveyed the wreckage around her. Her siblings had lost everything they owned, blown away by a seriously deranged rogue wolf. That wolf was now on life support in a prison ward with a pair of collapsed lungs. And Charlene's two siblings were in her guest room, ready to go out into the world without a single possession to their name.

Background

Charlene's story had begun a few months before, immediately after the sale on her parents' homestead had closed. After commission, the sale had netted \$300,000 to be split between her and her two brothers—Alan and Brian. As the oldest, she had been responsible for getting her former home ready to sell after her parents had died in a freak barbeque grill explosion. By the time the deal had closed, her two siblings had already gotten loans from the bank and spent their share of the money. Charlene had been in no such hurry, however. She recognized that she might have to live with what she purchased for a long time.

The Decision

Charlene has spent a considerable amount of time analyzing how to spend her inheritance. A variety of factors had weighed into the decision. As a given, there was her job—like her two brothers, she worked at a factory in Pigston. Second, there was housing. A number of factors had come into play here. The greater Pigston area could be very expensive—with the cost of land depending on proximity to the factory. There could also be substantial variation in construction costs—ranging from low-cost straw to mid-cost wood frame to high cost brick. There had also been the issue of transportation (e.g., walking, biking, automobile, etc.). Naturally, that choice could not be made independently of housing—since walking to the factory from the Pigston exburbs was not an option.

By the time Charlene had begun to study her choices in detail, her two brothers were already settled. Although she respected their choices, she chose a very different direction. Rather than spending big bucks on travel or a foreign prestige car, she had chosen to invest nearly all her money (\$95,000) on a brick house with many safety options, spending the remainder on inexpensive furnishings purchased from Sties-To-Go and a moped to get her back and forth to work without the slightest pretense of style. Charlene and her brothers' choices are summarized in Exhibit 1.

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A number of factors had entered into Charlene's decision. Her choice to spend so much on the house itself was motivated by the fact that brick homes had traditionally depreciated at a much slower rate than straw or wood and that Pigston was in an area that could potentially be frequented by a rare species known as the "bellows wolf"—capable of generating Category 5 winds (on the Saffir-Simpson scale) when they blew with their enormous lungs. Such a blow would immediately flatten a straw dwelling and would, if continued long enough, lead to eventual catastrophic structural failure of wood frame homes. Even brick houses (see Exhibit 2) were not guaranteed to withstand an encounter with a bellows wolf unless they were specially reinforced. Citing safety as her top priority, Charlene had opted for every construction safety feature available—leading to a home that far exceeded all known building codes.

Having chosen the house, the remaining elements of her decision fell into place naturally. She built the home on a lot in a family neighborhood close to Brian and about a mile from the factory and had minimized transportation costs by purchasing a moped. As she put it:

It's not as if I wouldn't prefer to be driving a luxury pen-on-wheels like Brian, or even a flashy pigup truck like Alan. But sacrifices had to be made. In the long run, I felt I'd be better off with a nice house in a great neighborhood that I could sell at a profit some years down the road.

Little did she realize how soon her life-style choices would impact her very chances for survival...

The Big Bad Wolf

It had been just a week ago that the big bad wolf had blown into Pigston. An unusually large rogue bellows wolf (canis gasbagus) who had been cast out of the peaceful colony to the north, his first stop had been the unincorporated area known as New Pigston, home of Charlene's brother Alan. Hearing a crash, he had looked out and seen—to his dismay—the wolf outside his neighbor's house, which had just collapsed. Even with advance warning, he had just barely been able to outrun the wolf in his chrome-detailed pigup truck as he headed towards his brother's house in Pigston. Once there, the two had laughed about the whole experience, dancing and singing the then-popular "Who's afraid...?" when Brian's stick house began to quiver. In terror, they realized the big bad wolf had caught up with Alan, and that they were trapped.

Just moments before they became dog food, divine providence intervened. As Brian's house collapsed—destroying his "sow magnet" German sports car and Alan's pigup—a single large branch separated from the rubble and started to fly away in the breeze. Some deep instinct within the wolf then appeared to take over, and it sprinted after the flying stick, temporarily forgetting the two trapped pigs. Extricating themselves from the rubble, Alan and Brian quietly sneaked away from the house, then sprinted over to the next block, where Charlene lived.

She opened the door and let them in. A few minutes later, there came the terrible noise. The big bad wolf had regained his senses and had picked up their trail. Louder and louder the sound grew, like a freight train running through the solidly built brick structure. And then, all at once, it stopped. Cautiously peering through the curtains, they saw the huge bellows wolf lying on his back, his tongue hanging limp out of his mouth and his eyes rolled up into the back of his head. Within seconds, a squad car arrived and nets were tossed over him. The danger was past.

Lessons Learned

As Alan and Brian sadly walked out the door, their entire inheritance squandered, Charlene pondered what she had learned from the experience. Living for the moment has its pleasures, she decided, but how much greater is the pleasure when you're not living in fear that each of those moments will be your last.

Exhibit 1: Inheritance Allocation of Pig Siblings

Item	Alan	Brian	Charlene
Housing	\$25,000: 5000 sq. ft. straw house \$5,000: Mud jacuzzi	\$40,000: 1600 sq. ft stick-frame house	\$50,000: 1000 sq. ft. brick house (basic) \$10,000: Tile roof with hurricane straps \$15,000: Electric hurricane window shutters
Lot	\$15,000: 10 acre mini-estate in unincorporated Pigston exburbs	\$40,000: 1 acre double golf course lot in Pigston proper	\$20,000: ½ acre lot in Pigston proper
Furnishings	\$25,000: "Party Hearty" complete set from William Sownoma.	\$10,000: 5 rooms of exotic furnishings from Pig 1.	\$4,000: 3 rooms of furnishings from Sties-to-Go
Transportation	\$35,000: P150 pickup truck with chrome detailing	\$40,000: Porkhe sports car	\$1,000: Moped
Travel	\$10,000: 3-week vacation in Europe	\$10,000: 3-week vacation in Europe	N/A
Mortgage	(\$15,000)	(\$40,000)	(\$0)

Exhibit 2: Building Specifications

Item	Description	Key Specs	Costs	Comments
Straw Construction	Straw-built residential single family unit	Life span: 2-5 years Depreciation: 50%(30%)[1] Wind rating: Cat 0 (55 mph)	~\$5/sq. ft.	
Wood Construction	Wood/stick-built residential single family unit	Life span: 20-25 years Depreciation: 10%(2%)[2] Wind rating: Cat 2 (100 mph)	~\$25/sq. ft.	
Brick Construction	Brick-built residential single family unit	Life span: 100+ years Depreciation: 0% [3] Wind rating: Cat 4+ (160 mph)	~\$50/sq. ft.	Wind rating may be affected by options
Popular Options				
Jacuzzi	Mud-filled tank agitated by air jets	Capacity: 6 pigs or 8 piglets	\$5000	
Exterior trough	Water and slop trough for parties	Capacity: 16 pigs or 24 piglets	\$3000	
Smoke house	Stone-built exterior structure for smoking parties. May also be used as a shelter.	Capacity: 6 pigs/100 sq. ft. Wind rating: Cat 5+ (175 mph)	\$100/sq. ft	State law prohibits piglets from attending smokers
Barbeque pit	Circular pit with firewall designed for roasting sides of beef	Capacity: 1 side of beef Fuel: wood or charcoal	\$2000 \$1000 (propane option)	
Automatic door	Door incorporating voice recognition to provide easy entry	Min DB: 75 Max DB: 150 Freq Range: 400-25,000 Hz	\$2000	Owners should not use "wee, wee, wee" as entry phrase
Stucco coating [4]	Cement-based mixture with appearance of mud	Color: brown Sound reduction: 5-10 DB	\$1/sq. ft	Primarily for aesthetics and noise reduction
Hurricane roof [4]	Tile roof attached by tie-down straps	Life span: 40-50 years Warrantee: 20 years [5]	\$10/sq. ft.	Adds 10-20 mph to wind rating
Hurricane Panels	Hand installed steel panels	Life span: 25+ years	\$50/window [6]	Adds 10-20 mph to wind rating
Hurricane shutters	Motor-operated aluminum roll ups	Life span: 25+ years Warrantee: 20 years [7]	\$1200/window [6]	Adds 10-20 mph to wind rating
<p>Notes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> [1] Straw Depreciation: First Year (Later Years) [2] Wood Depreciation: First 3 Years (Later years) [3] Brick construction does not appear to depreciate, owing to its long expected life span [4] Available only for brick construction [5] Warrantee applies only to replacement of roof, not to any structural damage caused by roof failure [6] Assume roughly 1 window for every 10 feet of perimeter space [7] Warrantee includes \$20,000 insurance for content damage in the event of panel failure 				