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The Great Brain

John D. Fitzgerald
Illustrated by Mercer Mayer
Chapter 1

John is a seven year old boy. He lives in the town Adenville, Utah in the year 1896. He has an older brother named Tom.

Tom liked to play tricks on people so he could take their money. Because he was crafty and smart they nicknamed Tom the Great Brain.

Tom and John thought of a scheme to make money off of a new invention their
The new invention was called a water closet. A water closet is another name for a bathroom with running water. Many people had never seen a bathroom with a toilet that flushed, so John and Tom decided to make children pay money to see it. Tom and John's mother thought this was dishonest and was sad that they took money. She told them to return the money.
John and Tom charge money for the kids to see their new toilet.
Chapter 2: Revenge Can be Sour

All of the brothers got sick. John was sick on his eighth birthday. When he got better John celebrated his birthday. His Uncle gave him an Indian belt for his birthday. John hated that he was always the last one in his family to get sick. John thought of a plan to get the measles before any of his brothers. He went...
To a friend who could get the measles before his brothers.

The plan was a success. John got the measles first then gave it to his brothers.

John was the first to get well. He teased and made fun of his brothers that were still sick. His brothers did not like that! They decided because John was mean they would not talk or play with him. This
made John very sad. He hated not being able to talk to his brothers who were his best friends! John begged his brothers for forgiveness! Tom said he would not talk to John unless John gave Tom his indian belt. John loved the belt he got as a birthday present, but he missed Tom more. John gave Tom his belt and Tom started talking to John again.
John teases his sick brothers.
Chapter 3: The Great Brain Saves the Day

It is summer time in Utah. The boys were ready to have some fun and get into trouble! For fun they went swimming in a creek. John did not know how to swim! His brothers wanted to teach him so they threw John in the water. John was mad because this was scary! He could have drowned! However, John did not drown. He was pushed to learn how to swim.
This is not the only adventure they had this summer! Two of their friends got lost in a place called Skeleton Cave. Tom wanted to think of a plan to save his friends. Tom was worried that his friends would be lost forever not because he loved them, but because he would lose money. No one knew but Tom had made a deal to sell John’s dog so that his dog
make puppies with their friend's dog. If Tom did not find his friends he would not get the money from the deal. Tom was determined to get his money and find his friends. He came up with a plan to find his friends by letting his dog sniff to find his friends and their dog. It worked! Tom found his friends and saved the day (and his money from the deal).
Tom and John's dog look for his friends that were lost in the cave.
A new person came to John and Tom's little town. The new person was named Abie Glassman. Abie went from town to town selling different things. Because Abie was new, John's dad invited Abie to come to their house for a special dinner. John and Tom were very excited because they got to make ice cream for their guest.

Tom was sly and made money by charging...
by selling leftover ice cream to his poor friends. When the ice cream was ready the family had a wonderful dinner with Abie. Abie and John's dad talked about Abie's future. Abie was getting old and it was starting to become difficult for him to travel. Abie did not know what to do. John's dad had an idea! Abie could open a store in their town. Abie agreed and opened a store.
John, Tom, and Sweyn make ice cream for their dinner guest Abie.
Chapter 5: Greek Immigrant

Abie was not the only new person in town.

The Kokovinis family moved to Utah from the country of Greece. The family had a young boy named Vassillios who everyone called Basil. The other boys in the town were very mean to Basil. He was different from them and they teased him because of it. Tom had an idea! He would make Basil like the other American boys. He would charge
do this for free. He charged Basil's dad money for Tom to be nice and make Basil more like the other American boys. Tom changed Basil's clothes and made him look like the other boys, but other kids continued to bully Basil. Tom decided to teach Basil how to fight back. The next time someone went to hit Basil, he fought back and won. Basil's dad was happy and paid Tom a dollar.
The boys bully Basil by tying him to a tree during a game.
Abie Glassman continued to sell things in his store. Suddenly, Abie got sick. He fainted three times. No one knew why he was sick.

John's mother got the doctor. The doctor said Abie was dying from malnutrition. Malnutrition happens when a person does not have enough food to eat. The doctor said it was too late to heal Abie. Abie died soon after. John felt sad and guilty about Abie's death.
John felt guilty because he thought he had killed Abie. He thought that because he went to another store and did not buy things from Abie, he kept Abie from having enough money to buy food.

This was not the whole truth. John did not kill Abie. The town arranged a funeral for Abie. They did not know how to give a Jewish funeral as Abie was the only Jewish man. They tried their best and gave Abie a nice funeral.
The town says goodbye to Abie after his death.
Chapter 7: The New Teacher

The summer was over and it was time to go back to school. John's older brother went away for school, but John and Tom went to school in town. There was a new teacher this year! The new teacher's name was Mr. Standish. John and Tom did not like Mr. Standish. Mr. Standish punished kids who broke the rules by hitting them with a paddle. That hurt! Tom wanted to get Mr. Standish fired.
Tom thought of a plan to get his teacher fired. He hid alcohol in Mr. Standish's room. Alcohol was not a good thing for a teacher to have at school. The plan worked well and Mr. & Standish got in big trouble. John felt guilty and told his dad the truth. Tom confessed that he tried to get Mr. Standish fired. This got Mr. Standish out of trouble. He was so happy he decided not to paddle kids that got in trouble.

Everyone was happy!
Tom gets paddled when he got in trouble at school.
Chapter 8: The Great Brain's Reformation

Tom and John's friend Andy got sick. This sickness got so bad that he had to have his leg cut off. Andy got a fake leg to replace the one that had to be removed. This made Andy sad and he felt useless. He could not do his chores or play with the other boys like he used to.

Andy felt so useless that he wanted to end his life. John helped Andy try to...
end his life. John thought he was being a good friend, but helping someone hurt themselves is not what a good friend does.

Thankfully, Andy was not successful in ending his life. Tom had an idea to help Andy! He would teach Andy how to do his chores and play with his new leg.

However, this would cost Andy his precious erector set. An erector set is an expensive toy.
that allowed you to build many cool things.

Andy loved his toy, but agreed to the deal. Tom kept his promise and helped Andy.

After a lot of hard work, Andy could play and do his chores! Andy was very happy.

Now he did not feel useless. Andy kept his promise and gave Tom his erector set. Surprisingly, Tom would not accept it. Tom had changed!

He chose not to be selfish any more.
Here is a picture of what Andy's artificial leg may have looked like.

This erector set was similar to Andy's in the book.