

If I Were a Rich Man

Lyrics by Sheldon Harnick and music by Jerry Bock (1964) (from "Fiddler on the Roof")

"Dear God, you made many, many poor people. I realize, of course, that it's no shame to be poor. But it's no great honor either! So, what would have been so terrible if I had a small fortune?"

C *C* *C* *C*
If I were a rich man, Ya ha deedle deedle, bubba bubba deedle deedle dum.
G7 *Cm* *F#dim7* *G7*
All day long I'd biddy biddy bum. If I were a wealthy man.
C *C* *C* *C*
I wouldn't have to work hard. Ya ha deedle deedle, bubba bubba deedle deedle dum.
G7 *Cm* *F#dim7*^(½) *G7*^(½) *C*^(¼) *C*^(¼) *C*^(¼) *C7*^(¼)
If I were a biddy biddy rich, Yidle-diddle-didle-didle man. I'd build a

Fm *Bb7* *Ebma7* *Eb7*^(½) *C7*^(½)
big tall house with rooms by the dozen, right in the middle of the town.
Fm *G7* *C* *C7*
A fine tin roof with real wooden floors below.
Fm *Bb7* *Ebma7* *Eb7*^(½) *C7*^(½)
There would be one long staircase just going up, and one even longer coming down,
Fm *F#dim7* *G7* *C*^(¼) *C*^(¼) *C*^(¼) *C7*^(¼)
And one more leading nowhere, just for show.

I'd fill my yard with chicks and turkeys and geese and ducks for the town to see and hear.
Squawking just as noisily as they can
And each loud "cheep" and "squawk" and "honk" and "quack" would land like a trumpet on the ear,
As if to say "Here lives a wealthy man."

I see my wife, my Golde, looking like a rich man's wife with a proper double-chin.
Supervising meals to her heart's delight.
I see her putting on airs and strutting like a peacock. Oy, what a happy mood she's in.
Screaming at the servants, day and night.

The most important men in town would come to fawn on me!
They would ask me to advise them, Like a Solomon the Wise. "If you please, Reb Tevye..."
"Pardon me, Reb Tevye," Posing problems that would cross a rabbi's eyes!
And it won't make one bit of difference if I answer right or wrong.
When you're rich, they think you really know!

If I were rich, I'd have the time that I lack to sit in the synagogue and pray.
And maybe have a seat by the Eastern wall.
And I'd discuss the holy books with the learned men, several hours every day.
That would be the sweetest thing of all.