

When Pigs Fly: A Cautionary Tale

Once upon a starry night, as I was walking along

I came upon a little pig singing a magical song.

As purple swirls spun about and magic lit the air,

he called for me to come to him, he'd caught me unaware.

So I listened to him sing a snort, a sniff, a wiggle.

Before I knew what was happening, my throat began to tickle.

A tiny pig much smaller than the one sitting before me

came flying out of my mouth, wings flittering in glory.

I tried to ask how that had happened but, alas there was no way.

My voice had left along with the pig without any delay.

Suddenly in a cloud of smoke, the magical singing pig disappeared into thin air.

I was bewildered, "Come back, voice thief!" I tried to yell, but no sound could come out

of my mouth. In a panic, I tried experimenting some more, "Can anyone hear me?" I

tried to shout but again, nothing. "HELP!" I tried to scream at the top of my lungs.

Nothing. I needed a plan. Then I remembered that in the next town over I could talk to

the wise old doctor I heard so much about. Maybe he could help to bring my voice

back. As soon as I thought those thoughts I started to run to his town lickety-split. It

wasn't too far away so I arrived as soon as the sun arose. I had heard he had owned his

home for so long that he didn't have an address. I kept looking for the house without

an address, and I wondered just how old this doctor must be to not have an address.

As it got closer to morning, some windows started to open. Then I spotted the house without an address! I bolted to the door and knocked furiously. The doctor opened the door, yawning, wearing his crumpled pajamas from a good night's sleep. I envied him for a moment.

"Good morning, ma'am." He said to me. I waved back then pointed at my throat and tried to say, "I can't speak." "You have come to the right place, my child. The pig has sent you to me to teach you about your quest to get your voice back." said the doctor. I must've looked confused because then he said, "You need to learn how to do things without a voice, then when you no longer need a voice, you will have it. To fulfill your quest, you need to pass the three tests and journey to The Castle Of Carmichael where the tiny pig who took your voice lives." He held out an old worn map with destinations on it named, "The Test Of Patience" and "Test Of Listening." "Also," He continued, "Every test that you pass, will earn you a key to the door of "The Castle Of Carmichael. There are 3 tests, so you will earn 3 keys." He passed me a bundle of food and drink and I nodded my head in thanks and set about my quest on foot. Later, as I was trudging through the trees, I looked at my map and realized that I was coming close to a mark on the map that read, in cursive handwriting that was hard to read, "The Patience Test." I reached it just as I started thinking about what it might be about. There was a large clearing between the trees with a young man sitting in the grass in the very middle of it. As I reached him, ready to finish this test and be on my way, he said, "I will be right back," and he stood up, "Do not leave this spot," He pointed to a small boulder beside him, "and then we can begin with the test." That

sounded good to me. I was exhausted after the long night I'd had. Tiredly, I nodded my head and sat down. Then he walked away, disappearing into the forest.

Time felt like it was slowing. I had been sitting there for over an hour. I wished I could scream from my frustration. Was he even coming back? But I had to wait and be patient like he had requested. Then I realized maybe this could be the test! As those thoughts ran through my head, he came into view. Running with a golden key in his hand he sped over. "You have passed," he sputtered, breathing heavily. Engraved on the key it said, "Key #1."

"On your way now." The man said. I mouthed the words, "Thank you." and I was off again, this time with a little more confidence in my step. The forest I had started into was thick and dense. Strange sounds could be heard around me. I reached into my back pocket and was relieved when I felt the key safe and sound. All of a sudden, the forest and the trees lightened up and the noises silenced and I could see the sky again. I had arrived at a small opening in the woods. A little creak trickled nearby. A small girl was sitting on a stump. She looked quite lonely so I walked over and waved and pointed to my throat, mouthing "I can't speak" so that she'd understand. She sniffled, "Hi." Her face and eyes were red, she must have been crying. I hugged her instead to show that I cared. I pointed to my ear to tell her I would listen to her. She talked all about her troubles. Then since I couldn't, when she ran out of things to share, she smiled instantly. "Wanna be friends?" she asked. I nodded my head yes then gave her another hug. As I started to turn to go back into the forest to get to the next test she called after me "Wait!" I walked back over and she whispered, "You have passed." She was giddy with excitement now. I was overcome with confusion. I looked at the map and discovered that right where I was standing was a

dot labeled, "The Listening Test." Then the little girl handed me the second key. "The Key Of Listening." She said, as if on cue. Then she warned me, "The next test is very tricky, to find it just step through those trees to the north and it will be beside The Castle Of Carmichael. But, beware once you arrive at the castle and step out of the woods you will only have two minutes to complete the quest or you will never have a voice again." I started back into the forest and in almost a second, the beautiful, purple, enchanting castle came into view. There were tiny flying pigs circling around it. I wondered if my pig was there. In front of the castle I spotted the coat of the little girl, my new friend. In the stories of her troubles she had said she'd lost the coat that her mother had carefully sewn for her. A coat like no other. It had sparkling threads throughout and at least a hundred pockets. Her mother had made it this way because she tended to lose things and the coat helped her to keep them safe. Then sadly, she had lost the coat itself with everything inside of it. I must bring it back to her, I thought, I don't care if the time runs out. It's the right thing to do. I grabbed the marvelous jacket and pushed through the forest. I presented her with her most beloved coat, "Thank you so much!" she exclaimed.

After once again giving our goodbyes, she encouraged me to at least try to go back to the Castle even though the time to get my voice back was over. She said the Castle was a magical place and worth exploring its grounds for fun still. Back at the castle an old woman was standing at the door. She gave me the last key for the "Test Of Honor." She explained that I had put others before myself and had earned the final key. I took Key #1 and Key #2 out of my pockets. Then I walked up to the door and unlocked the 3 locks. Inside the castle, I saw the pig I hadn't seen since I'd lost my voice. He was sitting on a little wooden stool. "You have learned much," The pig said in

my voice. "Now 'tis time for you to have your voice back." A tiny flying pig flew from the mouth of the pig on the stool right into my own. A gust of wind blew me back and I just started to sing with joy.

My voice is back and I've learned a lot.

About patience, listening, and honor was taught.

I don't need a voice to share who I am or what I believe.

It's about what I do and what I achieve.

My voice is really just who I am

and where I go and what I plan.

Who my friends are and how kind I can be.

It's even flying pigs and a magical mystery.

So watch out my friends for those flying pigs.

They're really lessons to teach important thingamajigs.

And if you haven't learned from the story you've read

soon you'll see those piggies flying around your head.