

## **The Tale of the Three Large Pigs**

Once upon a time there was a mother pig called Myrtle, who lived in a beautiful sty with all mod cons. That is to say she had a lovely, big fireplace by which she could warm her delicate little trotters and all the pig swill she could ever want to eat, but her pride and joy was the blue, velvet upright chair that stood in the corner of the living room. She had inherited it from her late husband's father's brother's cousin, who was a sea captain.

The only little problem in Myrtle's life - well to be honest it was three large problems- were her three, rotund, lazy sons, Pinky, Percy and Porker. Well actually I'm not being entirely honest, although Pinky and Percy were round and lazy; Porker was normal size and did make his mother a cup of tea sometimes when she asked nicely.

The trouble was that Myrtle had brought her problem on herself. She cooked the swill so it was tender and moist; she cleaned the pigs' trotters till they shone like new and scurried around all day making sure that her sons had everything they wanted. So much so, that those three pigs knew that they only had to ask and Myrtle would do it for them. So as you can see, it wasn't the three large pigs fault entirely, although understandably, if someone's going to run around after you, it seems a waste not to keep them busy all day.

Anyway this continued for many years until the pigs were all grown up, until one day something snapped in Myrtle's mind and she decided enough is enough. In fact the thing that snapped was the leg of Myrtle's beautiful, blue, velvet chair. Pinky and Percy had been messing about and shouting 'pile on, pile on' whilst sitting on the chair and just as Porker lowered his bottom onto Percy's thighs there was an almighty crack and the chair leg gave way, tipping the pigs in a heap onto the floor.

‘That’s it! You lazy good for nothing slob,’ Myrtle shrieked from the doorway as she came in from bringing in the washing. ‘Out. Out, I’ve had it with you, you must leave this house and make your own way in life.’

Well, as you can rightly imagine, the pigs tried everything to try and make her change her mind. Porker instantly put the kettle on, Percy rushed to take the basket from her and Pinky broke down in sobs on the floor at her feet. But it was no good, Myrtle was determined and the next morning the three large pigs found their bags packed with a packed lunch ready for each of them on top.

## Chapter 2

It was as they finished their sandwiches about fifty paces from Myrtle's front door that it started to dawn on the pigs that their mother was made of stern stuff and not going to change her mind. This was because they watched as a carriage drew up outside her house, driven by a handsome, young pig called Frank. Their mother, dressed in her finest clothes, gracefully got into it and waved liked royalty as she passed the pigs sitting under the tree.

'Who was that?' questioned Porker, who was by far the most intelligent and observant of the three.

'Who was what?' replied Percy as he licked the remaining jam from his trotter. 'I didn't see anyone.'

To this Porker, just knowingly, shrugged his shoulders picked up his bag and sauntered off down the road. It didn't take long before Percy and Pinky realised that if they didn't move their butts, they would be left behind and even they had enough brains to realise that without their brother they had no hope at all.

It wasn't long before the pigs met a man carrying some straw.

'Could we have some straw to build a house?' Pinky asked him.

'No, you can't, you lazy pig,' the man replied. 'What do you think this is a free country, where you can just take what you want? Go and get a job and earn it like everyone else,' he continued to yell at the pigs as they hurried away.

‘Well, that wasn’t very kind,’ said Percy, who was a little shocked at the man’s attitude, after having always taken everything he’d ever wanted without ever asking for it. ‘Perhaps he’s having a bad day,’ he said.

‘More like he’s not allowed on the computer whenever he wants,’ remarked Porker. ‘That makes me grumpy too.’

A little further along the road the pigs met a man carrying some sticks. This time Percy asked him for some to build a house. Well, you can imagine their surprise when the man didn’t even reply but just scowled at them, took a stick from his bundle and started chasing after them.

Out of breath the pigs reached a small stream meandering alongside a forest. Pinky threw himself on the floor and started to cry.

‘I want my mum,’ he sobbed. ‘Everyone’s so nasty out here. It’s nearly my lunch time and I’m hungry.’ In fact it was only ten- fifteen, but Pinky had learned to tell the time by his stomach.

‘Oh, for goodness sake,’ chastised Porker. ‘You’re twenty six next birthday. Stop howling like a baby and buck up. Look, here’s another man carrying some bricks, I’ll go and ask him.’

So while his two brothers hid, cowering behind a tree, Porker walked up to the man and, before you could say, Jack Robinson, returned to his brothers carrying a large pile of bricks with the man following behind in his lorry laden with pipes, cement, electrical wiring and six labourers. Because everyone knows, you can’t build a house with just a handful of bricks.

## Chapter 3

Before long the three pigs were installed in an exact replica of the pig sty they'd recently left. The only thing missing was the blue, velvet chair, and of course, Myrtle.

'What do we do now?' asked Percy as he opened the fridge door hoping it would be magically full, just as it usually was at Myrtle's.

But before anyone had a chance to reply there was knocking at the door and a deep, throaty voice called out.

'Large pigs, large pigs, let me come in.'

'Who on earth is that?' asked Porker as he looked out through the net curtains.

'No, we won't let you come in,' he shouted back having not seen anyone outside.

'Well, I'll just have to leave your delivery on the doorstep,' replied the post pig.

In an instant the pigs opened the door and found to their delight a huge Fortnum and Mason's hamper from their mother with a note telling them how much she loved them and hoped that the fresh swill would help them get through till they all got jobs. Because we all know that mothers like to think that their sons can't manage without them.

It was while Pinky was slurping up the spillage at the bottom of the wicker basket, [they'd chosen him to do it as he was the tallest] that there was another knock at the door and a high pitched squeaky voice called out.

'Large pigs, large pigs, let me come in.'

'Of course,' cried Percy, as he opened the doorway wide in case it was another hamper. Instead in limped a small, grey wolf with a walking cane, who looked at the pigs and smiled a leery, sideways smile.

‘How delightful to meet you all at last,’ he squeaked ‘Your mother has told me so much about you all and now I can see that she wasn’t lying. You are all fine, large pigs, well, except for you,’ he motioned at Porker who you remember was normal size. ‘Could I have a chair and sit down, I’ve been walking a long way to get here and am so tired.’

Because the pigs were feeling content they quickly pulled up a chair and helped the wolf sit down. They’d all forgotten what their mother had always told them about letting strangers into the house, even seemingly nice strangers who claim to know your mother.

‘You wouldn’t have a nice cup of tea and something to eat would you?’ he asked smiling sweetly.

‘We’ve nothing left to eat’,’ replied Pinky. ‘But we can make you a cup of tea.’

‘Never mind,’ replied the wolf. ‘Just put a large pot of hot water on the stove and I’ll provide the rest.’

Even though their stomachs were full to bursting, the pigs rushed into the kitchen to do as they were told at the thought of more food, all except Porker who, as I’ve said, was much more observant than his brothers. He quietly stood behind the wolf’s chair and watched.

## Chapter 4

It wasn't long before there was another knock at the door. This time there was a chorus of 'Large pigs, large pigs let us come in.'

'No, no,' gasped Pinky as the tenth wolf walked in and flopped down on the floor. 'We can't let any more of you in.'

'Well, we'll only huff and puff 'til you do,' said a fresh batch of six, grey wolves.

Before they knew it the pigs' house was over run with wolves that never seemed to be leaving. Pinky sweated over a hot stove in the kitchen trying to cook up the sackful of food that the animals had bought with them. Every time he filled another bowlful of steaming liquid, two more wolves demanded to be fed. And just as he thought he'd cleaned up the last mess and wiped down the work surfaces, another stack of dirty crockery appeared. As they hadn't got round to buying a dishwasher yet, Pinky noticed that his once soft plump trotters were becoming wrinkled and weak from all the time they spent in the hot, soapy water.

Percy had taken to his bed but no sooner had he got in it than five, grey creatures joined him and quite frankly, if you've ever been to bed with a wolf you'll know that it is not somewhere that a soft, pink pig would want to remain for long. Grabbing the dirty laundry from underneath the mass of bodies, Percy trudged off to the stream, yet again to scrub them clean.

Only Porker watched as the commotion went on and realised that this situation could not continue, something had to be done, and done fast. When nobody was looking

he slipped out of the house and rushed off down the road until he got a signal on his mobile phone.

It was only half an hour later when there was another knock at the door. This time nobody called out and only Porker heard it. Quickly moving around the room towards the door he lifted the latch and opened it. There standing in the doorway was Myrtle.

‘Oh, mum, thanks for coming. We really need your help.’ he said.

‘So I can see,’ she replied, eyeing the chaos before her.

Pulling herself up to her full height she strode over to where the old, grey wolf was still sitting in his chair.

‘Boris Layabout Loser,’ she screamed in her loudest, no-nonsense voice. ‘How dare you do this to my boys? Get your dirty, rotten, thieving family out of here and never come back. Otherwise you’ll have me to answer to.’

Well, you should have seen the terror, frozen on the smarmy face of Boris and his gang. Myrtle in a rage was not to be messed with. Up leapt the wolves and it took only one glance at the broom in her trotter to realise that she meant business.

Soon the front door was shut, leaving just Myrtle and her three sons seated in height order in front of a roaring fire.

‘Thank you mum,’ they all chorused. ‘And thank you for all you did for us. We didn’t realise until we had to all the work for Boris and his family, just how hard it is to run a home and look after a family.’

‘That’s alright, darlings,’ Myrtle said pouring herself another cup of tea from the pot. ‘But don’t think you’re coming home now. I think you’ll get along just fine from now on and I’ll come and visit often. Anyway, I must say thank you to you three. When you broke the blue, velvet armchair I found a stash of money inside that must have been



hidden long ago, so how about I take you on holiday and then buy you a few nick-knacks for your new home?’

You can probably visualise the response that Myrtle got to this suggestion but it’s enough to say that they all lived happily ever after.

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Moral of this story – don’t take your mum for granted, you never know when she may come in useful.