

Walking Home

Jubilee, what a sweetheart, always looking for the good. She loved to love things and had a knack for turning old things into something new to love. She spent a lot of time wandering the fields of her father's kingdom looking for lost things to bring home and save them and give them new life. Her father, the king, had always warned her about the back fence that bordered the property. He told her that very bad things lived beyond the fence. Mean, terrible things that were meant to kill, steal and destroy her, not to mention things like wolves, bears and all sorts of things with teeth! Throughout her childhood, he had reminded her of this, and that he had put the fence there for a reason, like a hedgerow, for her protection and she must never cross it. It was meant to keep the good things in and the bad things out. He had sacrificed his whole existence on that fence, for his children, and wanted her to understand that she would always be protected on his side of the fenceline. But there was something about the fence that called to her. That, there, is where she would find the treasure that she had been looking for. She believed her father when he had warned her of the evil things that lurked just beyond, but it did not calm her curious heart. She was drawn to the lost things, and she just knew that there was something lost, needing to be found.

Delvin, was a rebel. He had spent much of his young life on his own. No one could tell him what to do, or how to do it, or when it should be done. He had a roughness

about him. He never let anyone get too close. His fear of losing things that he loved kept him at a distance from anyone that tried to love him. He spent most of his days, outside, working from sun up to sun down, thinking that if he stayed busy, he would not have time to dwell on things that hurt, or love or anything else that was mushy, as he would call it. He had a little cold place inside his heart and he avoided love at all costs and even thought it to be silly and pointless. Delvin had a small farm. He had goats and chickens and even a few pigs. Not just normal pigs but wild pigs! He had trapped them when they were trying to steal his eggs and these pigs were mean! They had large scary teeth and sharp hooves and smelled terrible! He never let them roam free like the chickens and always kept a close watch on them. Until, the one little pig, much like Delvin the rebel, decided to break free one day and take off running!

“Come here you nasty pig!”, Delvin yelled as he dropped his tools and took off running. The dirt flew from under his boots as he tried to catch up to the pig, who was loving its new found freedom. “When I catch you pig, you will be bacon when I am done with you!!”

Jubilee had her head down, looking intently through a pile of old bottles stacked at the fence, for something to put her flowers in, when all of a sudden, WHOOSH, a big, ugly pig came screeching out from under the fence. She fell backwards and screamed to the top of her lungs, “HELP ME! Get away you terrible pig! HELP!”

Delvin scrambled over the fence and was reaching down for the pig when Jubilee jumped up and grabbed hold of his jeans and clawed her way around behind him to safety. This pig was serious! It was dead set on not going back to its pen and was squealing so loud, Delvin hardly heard Jubilee say, “ What is that thing? Why is it so mad and who are you?????”

“That is a pig, it does not like bacon and I am Delvin”, he said. “Now stop screaming and let me catch him so I can get back to work!” His tone was less than cordial and Jubilee responded, “Well take that thing back to where it came from, and you are about as mean as that pig so hurry up and get back to work!”

With a short scuffle, a few loud squeals and a dusting off of their clothes, the two went their separate ways. Jubilee started walking home, looking back over her shoulder, to make sure that he had a good hold on that pig and Delvin climbed back over the fence, pig under his arm, looking back over his shoulder as well. He had to get one more look at the prettiest thing he had ever seen. Sweet Jubilee, Daughter of the King.

Summer was passing by without any other pig escapades and the two had no more unexpected meetings. Delvin would watch for her to be at the fence and soon figured out that she would always find something to take home, even if it was just a rock. He could not stop thinking about her. Her long brown hair, half pulled up, and her hazel eyes shining like sunsets when the light was just right. He would dream of her often

and could not figure out why. He was not the type to get distracted by a girl, much less a girl so unlike himself. There was something about her that kept him awake at night and kept him wanting to see her again. He thought that he could always let the pig loose on purpose, but that might not end well for him or the pig next time, so he came up with a plan and went to work on it the very next day.

Delvin had plenty of odd and end things on his farm. He was a collector of sorts. He had all kinds of old things that could be reused and all kinds of things that could be brought back to life with a little love. He had old fans, old boots, pieces of tin, birdhouses, even a small bucket of rocks from a fishing trip a few years back. He never thought much about the rocks until he remembered the day that he first met Jubilee, and when they had the run in, she had been picking up all the pretty rocks and putting them in her pockets. He thought it was odd to be treasure hunting rocks, as they were no good for anything but filling holes to him. Nevertheless, he was intrigued by her and just wanted the chance to see her again so each night when he put the chickens to bed, he would sneak down to the fence and quietly place the shiny rocks there for her to find. He would hide them just enough under leaves and sticks, that the moonlight shining on them lit them up with sparkling flickers between the clouds passing by. They twinkled like diamonds as the moon rose and he was filled with anxious excitement and the thought of her finding his hidden treasure and taking them for her own.

Over the next few days, he would come back to check and see if his rocks had been plundered by the beautiful girl over the fence. She was such a sight!! She would bounce through the tall grass, as light as air, always with a smile on her face. He would watch her from afar, and everytime, filled with wonder, at how she could be so happy finding nothing but boring rocks. He had never felt that way about much, just to be happy and carefree. Maybe a few times in his life he had felt joy, but it was always short lived. His bones were tired and the callouses on his hands told the story of sorrow and responsibility that was not always his to carry, but he had not ever had a choice. His family had given him away to the world too soon and it showed on his face and in his heart. Jubilee was a breath of fresh air to him. She reminded him of carefree days and he enjoyed seeing her childlike simpleness. He wanted to get to know her for some reason but he didn't know why.

Jubilee shrieked with excitement, “ Oh my gosh!! I finally found a blue one! I have been wanting a blue stone to go with my bluejay feather for so long!” “ This will be perfect for my dreamcatcher I am making!”, she said loudly.

When he heard this, he went to work, gathering all things blue that he could find, thinking that she would have no idea that it was him hiding the things she was finding. Little did he know that she too, had been just as intrigued by him and would purposely say things out loud for him to hear, to give him ideas of what to hide so that she could find them, and then maybe she would get to see him again, by accident. She would say outloud, “ I sure wished that I could find a yellow piece of tin for my

wind chime”, and sure enough, the next day, a small piece of yellow tin would be findable right along where she was looking along the fence. The place where the pig got in. The place that her father warned her of. The place where good things get lost if they go too far. She was never afraid to go down to the fence because she knew that she was protected by the watchful eye of the kingdom, but that didn’t keep her from feeling scared come dark. It was a long walk back to the mansion. A long walk, especially alone.

Autumn was creeping in, like a slow river, lazily passing by without a sound. The leaves were changing with bursts of bright orange and red and the days were getting shorter by the minute. She knew that there would only be a few more chances to see Delvin before winter set in and it became too dark and cold to venture out. She had, by now, a well worn path that led straight to him. She would sing every step of the way hoping that he would be there when she got to the fence. She was disappointed every time, until one day! It was close to nightfall and she had been gathering twigs and rocks for so long that she didn’t realize that it was way past time to be home. All of a sudden she heard, “Hey you, don’t you know that terrible mean pigs like to scare girls like you this late in the evening!!” She almost fainted at the break in silence his voice caused! “You should not be out here this time of year, this late, this far from your house”, Delvin said to her. “Creepy, strange things live out here and would eat you up in a minute!”

Jubilee looked up from her bucket of prizes and calmly replied, “ Well, you should not sneak up on girls like me, this late in the evening, this time of year, and you should just walk me home so the creepy things don’t get me.” Both Delvin and Jubilee were smiling as big as the sun, you couldn’t even tell it was past dark. Instead of being worried about creepy things, Jubilee was so happy at finally getting to see him, and Delvin, well he was over the moon.

Delvin said to her, “I would love to walk you home, but I can’t. I am not a part of the kingdom and if anyone sees me over there, they will surely have my neck!” He continued, “I will stay here at the fence and see that you get safely away from the woods, but I have to stay on my side of the fence.” “ I have to put my chickens up anyway so I cannot be gone long, but I just wanted to make sure that you knew it was time to get back home before it got too dark.” Jubilee thought for a minute and figured that it was a good idea for him to stay and watch her go, because now that she was paying attention, it was very dark and really spooky and she really didn’t want to walk alone. But having him stay there and keep an eye out was better than nothing. As she walked, she wondered what he meant by saying that he could not walk her home, that they would surely have his neck? No one had even been rejected from the kingdom and everyone was welcomed. She wondered where he had gotten such a bad idea of the kingdom, because there was never any anger, or sadness or sorrow or rejection, there was only love and acceptance and happiness. She felt sad that he had the wrong idea.

With winter just right around the corner, the two met at the fence as much as they could. Delvin would rush to get done with all of his chores and hurry to meet Jubilee so that they would have as many hours together as sunlight would allow. They would sit and talk about anything and everything and share stories of their childhood. Delvin would tell her about all of his struggles growing up and how he wished that it had been easier and Jubilee would share her heartache over the lives lost of the people she loved.

He was falling for her. He had never minded being alone, until he would start to miss her silly smile and contagious laughter the second she walked away from him. She had never minded being alone but she was awfully sad to leave him and wanted more than anything to have a friend like Delvin. He was kind to her. He was thoughtful and she knew then, that he was not one of those things that her father had warned her of, one of the things meant to kill, steal and destroy. Delvin was good, and she missed him dearly when they had to part ways. She was falling for him too, like the leaves all around them. Floating on air, with love in her heart.

One evening, as they were preparing their goodbyes, Jubilee decided to ask him once more, for something she was afraid to get the answer to. She said, “ Delvin?”

“Yea?” , he replied.

“Will you please walk me home and see that I make it? It’s already so dark, I am afraid.”, she asked.

He dug his boot into the dirt, not wanting to answer but he said, “ I cannot come over there, I’ve told you that! I am not like you and I do not belong in the kingdom and I

don't want to talk about it." "Folks like me don't belong over there and you know it! I've done bad things and there is no use in asking me anymore because no one will accept me and I just don't fit in!"

She was surprised at the tone of his voice and gave it right back to him. She said, "Who told you that you don't belong in the kingdom? Surely not my Father! "What do you mean folks like you? Folks that work hard and look out for people? The kingdom is for everyone!! You could walk me home and stay if only you were not so stubborn, Delvin!"

She gathered her things and hesitated, waiting to see if he changed his mind but he stood still, firm in his stubbornness.

Just before she turned to go, he grabbed her hand and with a pleading voice said, "I just can't right now, so you best get going and I will see you tomorrow, right?" She said to him, "yes, tomorrow. I will see you tomorrow."

Jubilee walked the longest walk home that evening. She wondered what she could say to make him understand that the kingdom really was for everyone who asked to come in. That, no matter what you have done, where you have been or what you think of yourself, that it could be his home too. She hated the thought of him going back over the fence to the dirty, bad places and the all of the mean, troublesome people he knew there. She had hoped that he believed her.

Delvin returned home, that night, and was mad at himself for not walking with her. He knew that he should have and worried that this might be the last time she ever asked him to. He was afraid that he had ruined everything and that he would be alone forever, and miss her, forever. He just knew that she could not see him for his ugly past and cold heart. He was convinced that he was not good enough for her and by him telling her no, he was sparing her the heartache he felt would come.

Little did Delvin know, Jubilee did see him for who he was, even though he could not see it in himself. She saw him as a protector, someone who would fight for the good things. He was a gentle giant with a heart of gold. He was good. He was her best friend.

Jubilee made a promise to herself. She promised that no matter what he said, or how many times he said no to walking her home, that she would not give up on him. She could not allow anything to stand between them and eternal happiness, especially a worn down, raggedy fence. She would go to the fence as many times as it took. She was looking for treasure. She was looking for things worn out and worn down and wanted to give new life to them. She was looking for something lost to save and she found it when she found Delvin.