

A Sneaky Plan

Rabbit was very proud of his beautiful vegetable garden. It was full of many delicious plants including sweet potatoes and pumpkins. Each day Rabbit tended these prize plants. He watered the young sprouts, weeded between the rows, and picked the ripe vegetables. Rabbit worked hard and his garden showed the fruits of his labors.

In that same area lived two lazy animals. Pig and Warthog didn't like to work, but they did like to eat! Often they would sneak over to this bountiful garden. After checking to be sure Rabbit was off on an errand, the two friends would steal the ripe vegetables before Rabbit could harvest them. This was bad, but it was even worse because the two clumsy thieves would kick up dirt, turn over plants, and leave sticks and stones in the garden.

One day Rabbit grew tired of cleaning up after these two pesky partners and decided to pay them a visit. On the way to their house, Rabbit contemplated how to make these two stop destroying his beautiful garden. By the time their house was in sight, Rabbit had devised a sneaky plan.

When Rabbit appeared on their doorstep, Warthog and Pig looked at him with wide, frightened eyes. They feared what Rabbit was going to do to them because of their theft and destruction. But Rabbit surprised them. He greeted them kindly.

“Friend Warthog,” smiled Rabbit, “may I have a private word with you?” Warthog and Pig looked at each other in surprise. They had not expected Rabbit to speak so considerately to them.

“Of course, Rabbit,” replied Warthog. The two stepped to the side.

“I merely wanted to ask if you have noticed what a pleasant day it is today, Warty?” whispered Rabbit.

Warthog looked at Rabbit with astonishment. He could not understand why Rabbit wasn’t angry with them. But he did not show his surprise. He whispered back to Rabbit, “Yes, it is a pleasant day. It would be a good day for a swim.”

Pig watched the two with piercing eyes wondering what Rabbit was saying to his friend. He watched as Rabbit smiled again at Warthog before he turned to leave. Then Pig grew even more concerned when Rabbit stopped at the end of the path, and loudly called, “Please remember what I’ve said to you, Warty. Keep our conversation private and don’t tell anyone what we’ve discussed – not even your best friend!”

These words upset Pig immensely. He turned to Warthog and looked at him with sad, concerned eyes. “We have been friends for a long time, but now you are keeping secrets from me. That is not right. You must tell me what Rabbit said to you.”

“Oh, believe me, friend Pig. It was nothing. We just noted how pleasant the weather is today,” explained Warthog.

“That cannot be,” cried Pig with growing anger. “Why would Rabbit, from whom we have stolen many vegetables, come to our house to whisper with you about the weather? I do not believe you. I

am certain you and Rabbit are planning to hurt me. I cannot stay here with someone who keeps secrets from me. You are no longer my friend.” With that Pig packed his belongings and left Warthog stammering and stuttering that the conversation was indeed only about the weather.

Rabbit watched this scene from behind a big rock. He congratulated himself for devising such a clever plan to separate these two animals who had created such problems for him. He hopped off, assured that his garden would yield a bountiful harvest – safe from the thievery of Pig and Warthog!

Activities to Extend Your Thinking!

Expressive Language...

Choose one of the following activities to complete.

- Underline the adjectives used in this folktale. Make a list of them and the nouns that they describe.
- Choose your favorite three adjectives and draw a picture that illustrates the adjective/noun combinations.
- Think of other adjectives to replace the ones the author used. Write new adjectives for five of the nouns.
- Write a paragraph that explains how adjectives help tell a story.

Creature Characteristics...

Choose one of these activities to complete.

- Get together with some of your friends. Make puppets and produce a puppet show. Present this show for younger children.
- Pretend you are Pig. Retell this story from his point of view.
- Does Rabbit have characteristics that would make him a good leader? Write a paragraph that explains your thinking.

Life Lessons...

Choose one of the following to write about in your journal.

- Write a journal entry that explains what this tale teaches people who are like the Rabbit.
- Write an entry that explains the lessons of this tale for people like Warthog.