

The Three Keys

By Anna Ngo, Christmas 2012

Winner of the "Talbot's Got Writers!" Christmas competition.



In a kingdom, far away, there lived a royal family in a beautiful castle. Mary, the Queen, and Edward, the King, were very happy but only a little thing saddened them. They had no children.

Then, after many unhappy years, a lovely baby girl was born. The whole kingdom rejoiced with the King and Queen, for they liked the King and Queen and hated to see them sad. Now that a child was born, they were over the moon. Everyone was happy, that is, except the wicked witch who lived in a tall tower in a nearby forest.

Now, the witch had been sitting in the only room in the tower when she heard a trumpet's blaring and sheets of paper rustling. "Now, that is odd," the witch

thought to herself, “hardly anyone from the palace ever goes past or through this wood.” So with a little curiosity she got up and leaned out of the window to get a good view of what was going on.

The witch, Ella, saw that the little party of soldiers were hanging up sheets of paper. She waited until the last soldier was out of sight before conjuring up a summoning spell. One of the many posters flew up to her. She caught the piece of paper flapping gently, smoothed it out, and read it.



“A party will be held to celebrate at the Ceremony Garden to celebrate the birth of the Queen’s child, Skye, tomorrow at 7pm,” she read aloud, “and everyone has been invited.” She looked up from the poster and gave an evil smile. “Everyone has been invited,” that means she was going to go too.

Meanwhile, inside the palace, the Queen was gazing at her only child with love. Although she was filled with joy and happiness she was slightly tinged with worry. She had forgotten something, she was sure of it. But when she told her husband, he just smiled at her and said, “Don’t be silly, Mary. Our child’s celebration will have no mistakes. Don’t you be



going around fretting yourself. You need lots of rest for tomorrow evening.”

Next morning, the Queen went down to the nursery to see her darling Skye – to find that Skye’s cot was empty and all the nurses were asleep, slumped across the back of the chairs in the nursery. Mary rushed out of the room, flew up the stairs, flung open her bedroom door, and woke the King. “Edward, Edward, wake up! Our baby’s gone!,” she cried.

...

(The above is just the opening of an amazing story by Anna. Below is another few paragraphs but the real story has much more and so is much better...)

...

“Ella,” called the King, “We know that you have our child. So you’d better let her down or be severely punished when you get caught.”

“Get caught?” shrieked the witch. “As if you’d think I’d just stand around and get caught that easily. You’d better remember that your darling Skye is in my hands.”

“What can we do to please you so we can have our child back?” asked the Queen in a begging voice.

“Actually, I don’t have your daughter,” replied the witch thoughtfully. “But don’t worry, she’s in good hands.” After a few moments she said, “But you can have her back when you have solved this...”

The witch waved a finger and a long, single piece of golden thread twisted itself into words:

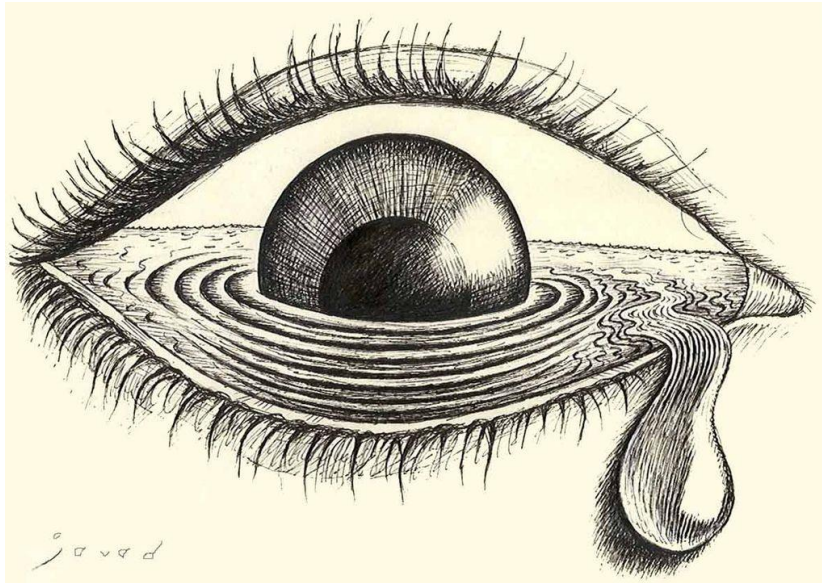
WITH THREE KEYS YOUR DAUGHTER WOULD BE FREED:
A BROWN KEY,
A GREY KEY,
AND A BLACK AND RED KEY.
THE BROWN KEY WILL SCALE THE WALL,
THE GREY KEY TO RUN AWAY,
AND THE BLACK AND RED KEY TO BRING TERROR.”



The witch screamed, “You’ll never solve that, until you do, your child belongs to me!” With that, the woman laughed an evil laugh and disappeared through the window.

Word travelled through all the land about the three keys and for a whole month people came from all the other lands bringing with them keys of red and black, grey, and brown. The couple gathered all of these keys and, at last, when they stopped coming, the King and Queen went to see if any of these keys would do. But when they arrived at the tower there was not a single key-hole in sight.

When the couple heard this they gave up hope of ever seeing their daughter again. They went back to their castle and, once again, lived in sorrow and great unhappiness.



The years passed and the princess grew up. One day a young man came to town with his three animals: a monkey, a donkey, and a turkey. He set up a circus stall for people to watch his animals. The animals performed perfectly and made the crowd laugh and laugh. But when the young man passed his worn hat around, the crowd drifted apart almost immediately. Only one very kind young shopkeeper gave him a few pennies. Just then he caught sight of the King and Queen going by in their carriage looking royal but very unhappy.

(CAN YOU GUESS WHAT HAPPENS IN THE STORY...?)

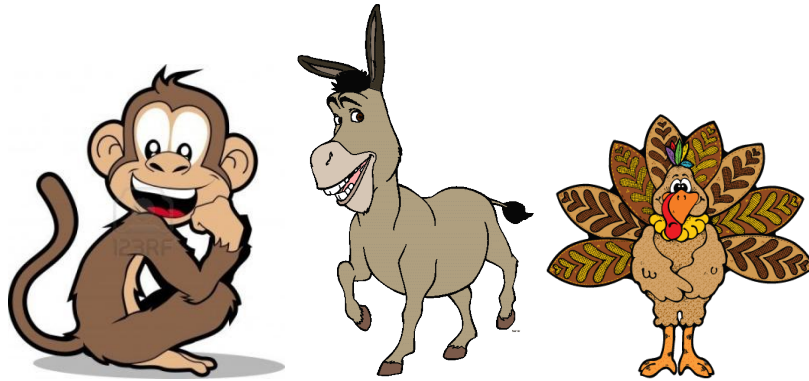
Anna wrote a lot more, and here's some of the ending...)

...

The man thought about it all. Then he looked at his animals. Then it hit him! He woke them up and they looked at him expectantly. "Listen," the young man explained, "the shopkeeper told me about the three keys – and you are all keys! Get it?" the man enquired.

The monkey shook its head, the donkey snorted, and the turkey ruffled its feathers.

“Ok, look. Donkey. D-O-N-K-E-Y. The K-E-Y spells key. Turkey, T-U-R-K-E-Y, and monkey, M-O-N-K-E-Y. All of your names end in KEY.”



... The man walked beside the donkey while the monkey rode on the donkey with the turkey. They arrived at the scene after 15 minutes. The young lad stood at the clearing and heard a rustle but it was only the leaves swaying in the gentle breeze.

He positioned all the animals at their stand. The monkey grabbed at the vines clinging onto the tower and started climbing. He climbed up near to the top when the turkey saw a dark figure creeping up behind its master. The figure did not see the master. So the turkey ran out of its hiding place and said, “Gobble, gobble, gobble.”

The figure, who was also the witch, screamed with terror and ran away with the turkey at her heel. The man turned around and smiled at the sight of a witch running away from a turkey.

Meanwhile the monkey had reached the top and encouraged the princess to peer over the window-ledge. She knew what she had to do and she gathered

up her dress and lowered herself over the window. She grabbed a vine and quietly and carefully descended down onto the ground. A hand reached out of the dark and grabbed her arm. Her shriek echoed through the whole wood.

The turkey stopped, and the witch recognised the shriek. "Skye!" She rushed back and remembered what she had said to the King and Queen that day many years before.

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... She screamed with rage and flew after the little company. The donkey carried both the princess and the young man. The donkey saw a wall ahead and the man encouraged it to jump the wall by whispering encouraging words to it. At the last moment, the donkey lifted its legs and soared over the wall.

... The young man escorted the princess up the steps to the castle and knocked on the castle door. Soon the family were hugging each other. The King and Queen asked the young man his name. "Mark."

"Well, Mark, seeing that you saved my daughter, you can have her hand in marriage."

On the day of the wedding everyone was there. Joy and happiness filled everyone's heart, and everyone said that it was a time they'll always remember. Everybody lived happily ever after. THE END