



The Three Gifts

Your Skills Are Not Your Own.

One day, a fairy appeared to the three sons of a poor mother in a village far away. The family had not much to eat, even less clothing, and were known to often beg for the things that they needed. Everyone in the village looked upon the family with pity and sorrow.

When the fairy appeared, the boys had been working their small farm. The oldest boy was talking nonstop as he picked crops, hardly doing any work, for he liked to hear himself speak. The middle boy was rushing to collect the crops as fast as he could so that he could impress the other farms-people around him with how fast he could pull crops. The youngest boy, however, was doing nothing but picking crops with his bare hands.

The fairy, presenting each boy with a box, spoke to them and told them that within each box was a gift. The gift was the skill that they would have for the rest of their lives. The oldest boy rushed to choose first and opened his box. Within it was the skill of singing. The oldest of the three boys was most delighted and proclaimed that he would sing for himself the most beautiful songs in the shower. The second boy, having two boxes to choose from, carefully picked one, but not before shaking it. As he opened it, he saw something shiny. It was the golden strings of a violin! The fairy told the second boy that he would have the skill of playing the most beautiful songs on the violin. The second boy was most enthusiastic, stating that he would show people the world- over how well he could play the violin, and make himself the most famous violinist in all the world. The third and last boy - the youngest - opened the final gift. Within it was a common hammer. The other boys, seeing this, simply laughed. But for this gift, the fairy said nothing.

Years passed, and the fairy reappeared, asking each boy what had become of their gifts. The first boy - the eldest - had nearly stopped singing, because he was tired of hearing himself sing. **"Why must I sing, if mine are the only ears that hear?"** The violin of the second boy had become all but unusable as he had become tired of chasing fame. **"Why should I play, if others play better than I?"** The youngest boy was different, however. Though he had received a common hammer, he realized that with it became the skill to build. And he used his skill for good to help others. He built thousands of homes for poor people, and more, built more homes as a business. His skill was used to help others and then he was also able to benefit.

Then, after hearing each boy, the fairy spoke, "If you use your skills only for yourself, you may tire of your own selfishness, if you use your skills only to be seen, others may be greater than you, but if you use your skills and abilities to help others, what you do will never be forgotten."

She continued, "The two of you boys seemed to have more important skills, but used them for yourself. The youngest of you seemed to have the least important skill but used it to serve others. He understands that his skills are not for him but were given to him to help the world.

Remember- Your skills are a service to be used to help others, not for selfishness or fame.