

Name: _____ Date: _____

Key Vocabulary

“micro-pig”	a dishonest term for pigs who are deliberately malnourished so that they remain smaller than average
commercial farm	a place where a large number of animals are raised for food; the animals are typically confined to small areas
animal companion	an animal who was adopted by a human and is cared for
breed	to cause animals to have offspring on purpose
vegan	someone who doesn't use animals as food or clothing or harm them in any other way; something that has no animal ingredients or isn't made from animals
legacy	something that is left behind for others to benefit or learn from

The following images are from *The True Adventures of Esther the Wonder Pig* by Steve Jenkins, Derek Walter, and Caprice Crane and illustrated by Cori Doerrfeld.

Get Ready to Fall in Love With Esther the Wonder Pig

A friend who wanted to find a home for a young **“micro-pig”** persuaded Toronto couple Derek Walter and Steve Jenkins to welcome piglet Esther into their lives. But soon it became obvious that Esther was no “micro-pig.” She grew bigger every day, and soon she towered over the couple’s two dogs.



Derek and Steve guessed that Esther had been born on a **commercial farm** and had been cast aside because she was a “runt,” the smallest piglet in her litter. Every year, millions of pigs are raised for food on commercial farms where they can't do anything that's natural or important to them.

Although the couple was surprised to learn that their new **animal companion** had likely been meant to be eaten, they were even more surprised to see how similar Esther was to their dogs. She easily learned how to sit for a treat and even how to open the refrigerator door to sniff out something yummy, such as an apple. She loved to play tug-of-war and tag and chew her toys, and naptime meant finding the nearest dog or human to snuggle up to.

Even though it soon became apparent how big Esther would get and how much care she would need, Derek and Steve couldn't bear to part with her. As they put it, “This isn't Esther's fault, she didn't ask for the life she was given. We have the chance to provide her with the life she deserves, not the one she was **bred** for. What kind of people would we be to deny her that?”

As Esther continued to grow, she also grew closer to her dads. Soon Derek and Steve realized that the animals they had always called “dinner” weren't so different from the animals they called “friends.” Before long, both men went **vegan**. They started a Facebook page ([Facebook.com/EstherTheWonderPig](https://www.facebook.com/EstherTheWonderPig)) to help other people see that all animals are thinking, feeling individuals who value their families and their lives. Esther enjoyed a beautiful life for 11 wonderful years before passing away peacefully at home. Her **legacy** of love and kindness to animals will inspire countless people for many years to come, just as her story inspired millions of people during her lifetime.

Comprehension Questions: ‘Get Ready to Fall in Love With Esther the Wonder Pig’

1. Why did Derek and Steve welcome a pig into their lives?

2. Why did Esther’s dads think she had likely been “meant to be eaten”?

3. In what ways was Esther similar to Derek and Steve’s dogs?

4. Why did Derek and Steve choose to go vegan?
