

ONCE UPON A TIME, A PIANO STORY

Once upon a time there was a piano. She lived in a two story red house on 5 Chestnut street and that's all she figured that she needed to remember about her address. For God's sake, any one who was coming to play her already knew what city and state they were in.

She knew how to play in all the keys but the black notes were her favorites as they were the ones most often pushed down by children. Of course some hands were dirty when they touched her but she was forgiving.. She tried to be patient with sticky hands that left traces of things recently eaten, patience for arthritic hands who couldn't quite reach the octaves they had grabbed just a year ago, and patience for the ignorant brutish hands that pounded savagely on her keys and made her shake so badly that her strings and hammers might burst out of her belly.

Her name was Veritas named after the Greek goddess of truth, but she preferred to just be known as Vera. She had her favorite musical works because she played them so often (were these called masterpieces)? and there were also the pieces she refused ..no I won't play that. I don't like how sad it is. No no that's too fast for an old girl like me, no, no, this modern shit is just downright ugly. Go find yourself another piano.

Some of the melodies she played just opened her heart. On the other hand it was complete torture when someone would push down the pedal and leave it there, forgetting about it for what seemed like centuries. She wished she could be more helpful with pianists playing trills in general; she would have liked to suggest better fingerings or, for those who just couldn't trill at all she wished she could share her condolences.. you'll trill better when you're older.

Vera's favorite season was summer when the windows were left wide open and she could peer out from her corner in the living room and see the sun as it moved slowly in its journey across the horizon. Winter was her least favorite when the old radiator clanked and clanked in counterpoint to whatever piece she played. Still, some winter afternoons were cozy when school was cancelled because of the snow and the kids used her as a table for their hot chocolate and vanilla wafers.

No one knew Vera's exact age because there was no paper work left from her previous owner. Since her keys were ivory it was clear that she had to have started her lifetime before 1945 which would place her in her seventies, but she

might very well be older.

At some point, Alvin the tuner who came to help her twice a year found a long series of numbers and letters on a plate in front of her strings which seemed very important. Aha! According to the plate she was brought to life in 1928 so in fact she was ninety one! Maybe she had collaborated with the hands of a vaudeville player or a church accompanist or someone who played for silent films? Who knew? She could sort of remember fragments of passages she played decades ago but most of her memories had been erased over time.

One morning Vera wondered, "What if?"

It started like a whisper but then grew louder. WHAT IF?

Amy demonstrates)

What if the piano could sound bluesy? or funky? What if she kind of swung to the beat or created a latin groove- what if the music she made was full of surprises? What if she dared....WHAT IF SHE DARED, WHAT IF SHE DARED TO IMPROVISE?. Wouldn't it be like ***SLIPPING INTO A NEW DIMENSION? FINDING THE KEY TO MAGIC?*** (Said by Randy, Dass and Amy)

YEAH!

Vera loved bass lines, so she started by trying a few out-(Dass snaps his fingers to keep time while Amy demonstrates)

Narrator responses with phrases like "Yeah!" "Cool" "You go girl!" "Get down!" In this section and periodically in "Blue Vera".

Amy, Randy and Dass all look at each other during this section- nodding, shrugging, as if to say , *Is this ok? Yes I think so..*]

Of course having a tune was important-
And a bluesy riff -that she could play around with-
And then those mysterious harmonies that the jazzy pianos knew about
And then it became time to mix it all together —and then to mix it again—
And invite other musicians to join in.....

Intro to A is cued

Play through B and repeat A

C (Improv cells)

On cue: Vera was super excited. Wow this was even more fun than she had imagined ! She said, SHE SAID, SHE SAID-
I WANT TO DANCE!!!!!!!

(This cues the dance section)

Cue to A and outro.

All say *Yeah* after final chord.