

Name _____ Date _____

Key Vocabulary

micro-pig	a dishonest term for pigs who are deliberately undernourished so they will stay small
commercial farm	place where many animals are raised for food and typically confined to small areas
animal companion	animal who was adopted by a human and is cared for
vegan	someone who does not use animals, including for food, or something that does not come from animals

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

Persuaded by a friend who wanted to find a home for a young “**micro-pig**,” Toronto couple Derek Walter and Steve Jenkins welcomed Esther the piglet into their lives. But it soon became obvious that they had all been misled—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 cast aside because she was a “runt,” or the smallest piglet in her litter. Every year, millions of pigs are raised on commercial farms, where they can’t do anything that’s natural or important to them, and then killed for food.

But if the couple was surprised to learn that their new **animal companion** had probably been meant for a dinner plate, 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 loves to play tug-of-war and tag and chew her toys, and naptime means 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 that she was given. We have the chance to provide her with the life that she deserves. What kind of people would we be to deny her that?”

As Esther continued to grow in size, she also continued to grow fonder of her two dads. And 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) to help other people see that all animals are thinking, feeling beings who value their families and their lives.

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

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

2. Why did Esther's two dads think that she had probably been "meant for a dinner plate"?

3. In what ways is Esther similar to Derek and Steve's dogs?

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