



Where Is the Courage Pearl?

A story for Sophie

TuckBook

The main character of this story: **Sophie**

Sophie slid a shiny blue pencil into her little school satchel, then stopped with her hand on the zip. Tomorrow she would go back to school. “I wish I had a pearl of courage,” she whispered, “a small one that would fit in my pocket.”

On her bedroom windowsill, tucked behind a pot of sleepy lavender, lay a shell map she had never seen before. It was pearly white, with blue lines curling across it. A ribbon from Sophie’s hair had slipped from her braid and landed on the map. At once, the lines gleamed like moonlit paths.

The shell map opened with a soft click. Inside was a picture of an arched doorway, and beneath it, in tiny wavy writing, were the words: Kingdom Under the Waves. Find the shy courage pearl in the Quiet Garden. Sophie put the map into her satchel, tucked in her ribbon, and stepped through the silver arch.



She did not splash into open water. She arrived inside a round, glassy bubble-road, as safe and dry as a hallway, while blue water shimmered all around it. Seaweed waved beyond the clear walls. Sophie could breathe easily. Far ahead, a lantern fish glowed gold, then swam around a bend.





“That must be my clue,” said Sophie. She hurried after the little light until she reached a gate made of pink coral. But the lantern fish had vanished, and three curly paths twisted away from the gate. One path was sprinkled with bright shells, one with floating bubbles, and one with nothing at all.

Sophie chose the bright shells first. They led to a grand clamshell that looked important. She leaned close. “Courage pearl?” she asked. The clam yawned so hugely that it sneezed a puff of sand over her knees. Then it shut with a polite little thump. Sophie brushed sand from her pyjamas and giggled. “Not that way.”

Next she followed the bubbles. They rose through a tunnel of green sea grass and popped against the roof of the bubble-road. Pop. Pop. Pop. At the end, Sophie found only a colony of tiny crabs playing bubble-ball with a round bit of sea foam. The bubbles were their game, not a message.





Sophie looked back at the empty third path. It was darker than the others, though not black, only deep blue like the bottom of a paint pot. Her fingers squeezed the strap of her satchel. Then she remembered the ribbon inside. “I can make my own bright path,” she said.

She tied one end of the ribbon to the coral gate and held the other as she walked slowly down the quiet path. The ribbon trailed behind her in a smooth blue curve. Soon the lantern fish appeared again, glowing beside a low doorway covered in feathery moss. Its light showed a shell-shaped mark exactly like the one on Sophie’s map.





Beyond the doorway was the Quiet Garden. Pale anemones opened and closed like sleepy hands. Round stones rested among silver leaves. Yet the garden was dim, and Sophie's tummy gave a small wobble. "I'm scared of not seeing," she admitted. She took a slow breath in, then let it out. "At school, I know how to save a place beside me for someone who needs one."





Under a silver leaf, something answered with a warm glow. Sophie breathed slowly again. “And I know how to say, ‘Would you like to play?’” The glow grew brighter. A small pearl rolled out from its hiding place, shining softly in her palm. It was not loud or sparkly. It was a steady, friendly light.

Sophie slipped the courage pearl safely into her pocket. The lantern fish blinked once, as if saying goodnight, and the bubble-road carried her gently home. Her ribbon was back in her satchel, her shell map was folded shut, and the lavender on the sill smelled sweet and green.





She placed the satchel beside her bedroom door for morning. In bed, Sophie felt the pearl's tiny warmth through her pyjama pocket. Tomorrow, she thought, I can take a slow breath. I can make room. I can ask someone to play.







The pearl glowed once beneath the blanket, small as a raindrop and bright as a kind idea. Sophie's eyes grew heavy. She listened to the quiet house, held her courage close, and drifted into sleep.

Good night, Sophie.



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After the story



WHAT THIS STORY IS ABOUT

On the night before school, Sophie finds a magical shell map and journeys through the safe Kingdom Under the Waves to find a small courage pearl. Back in bed, she discovers that courage can begin with one slow breath and one kind invitation.

TALK ABOUT IT AFTER READING

After reading, ask: “Sophie, which moment felt the warmest or bravest today?”

AND TOMORROW...

On her next school morning, Sophie may notice that the courage pearl shines when another child needs a friend.





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6 minutes of reading



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