

# ABIGAIL FINDS HER VOICE

An original text by Anne Renaud

Abigail Newberry-Fretz has one wish.

Alright, so maybe not just one.

She wishes she had a pet salamander named Gladys.

She also wishes she could turn Brussels sprouts into bubble gum.

But above all, Abigail wishes she had a voice.

Not just a sing in the bathtub kind of voice.

And not just a sing along to her favorite music kind of voice.

Abigail wishes she had a voice that makes people cheer BRAVO!

ENCORE!

MORE!

A voice to sing....in the school choir.

That is a big wish for a voice like Abigail's.

Because when Abigail Newberry-Fretz sings, she does not sound like nightingales twittering or wind chimes tinkling.

She sounds like something, well....different.

That's what some of the choir kids think, anyway.

Like Benjamin Whipple, and Beatrice Cramps.

And even Agnes Flint who never says anything bad about anyone.

Dialogue bubbles: *“Is that a duck quaking?”*

*“Can someone oil that squeaky door?”*

*“Who stepped on the cat’s tail?”*

When Abigail auditions for the school choir, Mr. Quillwort squints his eyes and makes a crumpled-up face.

Abigail does not think that is a good sign.

Then he shuffles his feet and wrings his hands.

Finally, he clears his throat and says: *Abigail, your voice is sort of like...an unbaked cake... an unplanted garden...it’s.... it’s not quite done...perhaps you can try out for choir again next year.*

Abigail thinks that is a strange thing to say. What does her voice have to do with baking or gardening?

*Perhaps you can join the school orchestra to accompany the choir,* suggests. Mr. Quillwort.

But Abigail’s favorite instruments are...

The bag pipes.

The didgeridoo.

And the accordion.

The music room has none of these.

*PHEW!!...* says Mr. Quillwort, which Abigail thinks is another strange thing to say.

So, what does Abigail do?

First, she snuffles a little.

Then she pouts a little.

Finally, Abigail just keeps on singing.

She sings all the songs she knows, then she sings them again.

And when she tires of those, Abigail decides to write herself new songs and sings those too.

Abigail lets the words tumble out of her head.

Then she scribbles them into her notebook before they scatter.

Sometimes the words spill out at the oddest times.

Early in the morning before she even opens her eyes.

When she dangles from the monkey bars.

Even when she is walking home from school just minding her own business.

Abigail always keeps her notebook and pencil near to capture them.

Abigail writes songs that are silly.

*Nancy Noodleman was not sweet*

*when she stuck out her toes shouting "Smell my two feet."*

*And Nancy Noodleman was not cool*

*when she jiggled and wiggled and peed in the pool.*

And songs about magical places.

*Philomena Flea set out to sea in a thimble of silver and bleu.*

*For three days she drifted, was lulled, and then lifted*

*while storms bellowed and blew...*

She writes about what she sees.

*The sky is painted shades of gray.*

*All dark clouds have come to play.*

*Plop, plop, down come raindrops...*

Or who she wants to grow into when she gets bigger.

Abigail writes until the words empty out of her and new ones fill her up.

Then a funny thing happens.

Some of the choir kids start singing Abigail's made-up songs too.

Now they still think she sounds like ducks quacking, doors squeaking and cats meowing.

But her songs stick.

*Dialogue bubbles:      Twinkle-Toes Hatty the tap-dancing frog*

*Lives with her friends down in a bog.*

*Clickety, Clickety, Clack, Clack, Clack....*

They even give her high fives and thumbs up, which is sort of like cheering BRAVO! and ENCORE!

Mr. Quillwort calls Abigail's words poems and says she should write a song for the school choir.

Abigail does not think that is a strange thing to say at all.

Because the more she writes, the more she wants to write.

It is like an itch that she needs to scratch.

And that is when Abigail Newberry-Fretz realizes she does have a voice after all.

And it sings from every page of her notebook.