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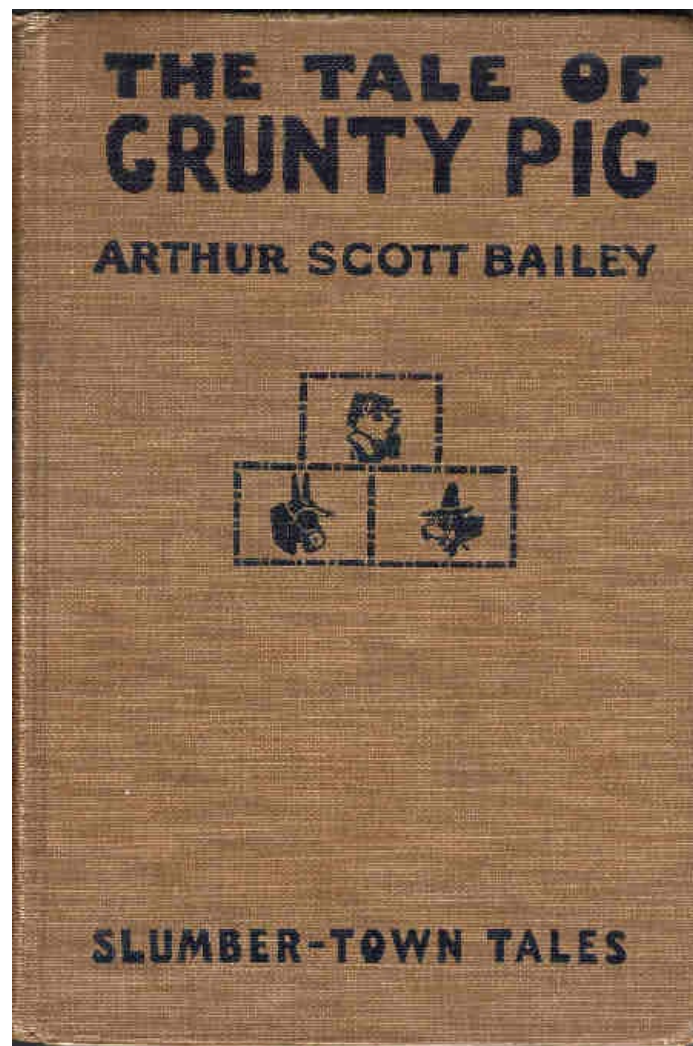
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THE TALE OF  
GRUNTY PIG

*SLUMBER-TOWN TALES*  
(Trademark Registered)

BY

ARTHUR SCOTT BAILEY

AUTHOR OF

*SLEEPY-TIME TALES*

(Trademark Registered)

*TUCK-ME-IN TALES*

(Trademark Registered)

THE TALE OF THE MULEY COW

THE TALE OF OLD DOG SPOT

THE TALE OF GRUNTY PIG

THE TALE OF HENRIETTA HEN

THE TALE OF TURKEY PROUDFOOT

THE TALE OF PONY TWINKLEHEELS

THE TALE OF MISS KITTY CAT



**Grunty Pig is Scolded by Henrietta Hen.**  
*Frontispiece* ([Page 17](#))

*SLUMBER-TOWN TALES*

(Trademark Registered)

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# THE TALE OF GRUNTY PIG

BY

ARTHUR SCOTT BAILEY

Author of  
"SLEEPY-TIME TALES"  
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AND  
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ILLUSTRATED BY  
HARRY L. SMITH

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# THE TALE OF GRUNTY PIG

1

## I

### THE RUNT

He was the smallest of seven children. At first his mother thought she would call him "Runty." But she soon changed her mind about that; for she discovered that even if he was the runt of the family, he had the loudest grunt of all. So the good lady made haste to slip a G in front of the name "Runty."

"There!" she exclaimed. "'Grunty' is a name that you ought to be proud of. It calls attention to your best point. And if you keep on making as much noise in the world as you do now, maybe people won't notice that you're a bit undersized. You certainly sound as big as any little shote I ever saw or heard."

2

So that was settled—though Grunty Pig didn't care one way or another. He seemed to be interested in nothing but food. There is no doubt that he would have been willing to change his name a dozen times a day for the slight bribe of a drink of warm milk.

His mother sometimes said that he had the biggest appetite—as well as the loudest grunt—of all her seven children. And she was glad that he ate well, because food was the very thing that would make him grow.

"You won't always be runty, Grunty, if you eat a plenty," Mrs. Pig often told him. And then he would grunt, as if to say, "You don't need to urge me. Just give me a chance!"

3

Grunty Pig soon learned that being the smallest of the family had one sad drawback. His brothers and sisters (all bigger than he!) could crowd him away from the feeding trough. And they not only *could*; but they often *did*. Unless Grunty reached the trough among the first, there was never a place left where he could squirm in. If he tried to eat at one end of the trough he was sure to be shouldered away and go hungry.

So whenever he did succeed in getting the first taste of a meal he took pains to plant himself in the exact middle of the trough. Then there would be three other youngsters on each side of him, all crowding towards him. And though he found it a bit hard to breathe under such a squeezing, at least he got his share of the food.

Poor Mrs. Pig! Her children had frightful manners. Though she talked and talked to them about not crowding, and about eating slowly, and about eating noiselessly, the moment their food was poured into their trough they forgot everything their mother had said.

4

That is, all but Grunty Pig! If he happened to be left out in the cold, so to speak, and had to stand and look on while his brothers and sister stuffed themselves, he couldn't help remembering his mother's remarks about manners.

"It's awful to watch them!" he would gurgle. "I don't see how they can be so boorish." He thought there was no sadder sight than his six brothers and sisters jostling one another over their food, while he couldn't find a place to push in among them.

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## II

5

### A NEW WAY TO EAT

One thing, especially, distressed Mrs. Pig. Her children *would* put their fore feet right into the trough when they ate their meals out of it. Nothing she said to them made the slightest difference. Even when she told them that they were little pigs they didn't seem to care.

"We're all bigger than Grunty is," said one of her sons—a bouncing black youngster who was the most unruly of the litter.

"You're all greedy," Mrs. Pig retorted. "Do try to restrain yourselves when you eat. Remember—there's plenty of time."

"But there's not always plenty of food," Grunty Pig told his mother.

6

"Sometimes there isn't any left for me."

"I know," said Mrs. Pig. "I know that your brothers and sisters eat your share whenever they can. Farmer Green furnishes enough food for you all. And if you children didn't forget your manners everybody would get his share—no more and no less."

Now, Mrs. Pig was not the only one that noticed how piggish her youngsters were at the trough. One day Farmer Green himself remarked to his son Johnnie, as they leaned over the pen, that that litter of pigs did beat all he had ever seen.

"They come a-running at meal time as if they were half starved. It's a wonder they don't get in the trough all over."

Johnnie Green liked to watch the pigs.

"That black fellow's the greediest of the lot," he declared. "He's getting to be the biggest. He's almost twice the size of the little runt." 7

"The runt doesn't get his share," said Farmer Green. "We'll have to do something to help him, or he'll never be worth his salt."

Grunty Pig looked up at Farmer Green and gave a plaintive squeal, as if to say, "Hurry, please! Because I'm always hungry."

And Blackie, his greedy brother, looked up at Farmer Green too. He said nothing. But his little eyes twinkled slyly. And afterward he told his brothers and sisters that Farmer Green needn't think he could keep *him* from drinking all the skim milk he pleased.

"If Mother can't make me behave, surely Farmer Green won't be able to," he boasted.

Of course Blackie Pig was very young. Otherwise he would never have made such a silly remark. And he soon learned that Farmer Green was more than a match for him. 8

The next day Farmer Green made a long lid that dropped over the feeding trough and covered it completely. And in the lid he cut seven holes—one for each of Mrs. Pig's children.

There was no more jostling at meal time. There was a place for everybody. And Mrs. Pig was delighted with the improvement. When Farmer Green filled the trough, each of the children stuck his head through a hole and ate in the most orderly fashion. To be sure, there was some squealing and grunting, and some snuffling and blowing. But it seemed to Mrs. Pig that no youngsters could have behaved more beautifully.

And Grunty liked the new way of eating, too. But Blackie made a great fuss. He complained because he couldn't stick his nose through two holes at the same time! 9

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### III

## THE LOOSE BOARD

 10

After Farmer Green put the lid with the holes in it over the top of the feeding trough, Grunty Pig began to grow. At last he was getting as much to eat as his brothers and sisters. And the bigger he grew, the more food he wanted. He was always on the watch for some extra tidbit—always rooting about to find some dainty that others had overlooked. Many a delicious piece of carrot, or turnip, or potato-paring rewarded him for his eager searching.

Still, Grunty Pig was far from satisfied. He had a great longing to get outside the pen where he lived with the rest of Mrs. Pig's seven children. 11

"Out in the wide world there must be many good things to eat," he thought. "I'd like to find the place where the potato-parings grow."

But of all this, Grunty Pig said nothing to anyone. If the chance ever came to slip out of the pen, he intended to take nobody with him. He had not yet caught up with his brothers and sisters in size, even if he had outstripped them in the matter of brains. And he feared that any one of them would crowd him away from the good things that he meant to find beyond the walls of the pigsty.

Little did Mrs. Pig dream what plans filled the head of her son Grunty. When

she saw him sniffing around the walls of the pen she never once guessed that he could be looking for anything except something to eat. How could she know that Grunty—the littlest of the family—was searching for a place to escape?

12

Now, it happened that there was one loose board in a corner of the pigpen. The nails that once held it had rusted away. Nobody but Grunty Pig had discovered that by pressing against an end of this board one could bend it outward.

It was too bad—for him—that he had grown so rapidly. Had he been just a bit smaller he could have squeezed through the opening.

Here Grunty met the first real problem of his life. For some days he puzzled over it. One thing was certain: he couldn't make himself smaller, unless he stopped eating. And that was out of the question. In the end he made up his mind that there was only one thing to do: he must make the opening bigger.

Day after day Grunty Pig crowded against the loose board. And at last came his reward. Two more rusty nails gave way all at once. Under Grunty's weight the board opened wide. And as he slipped through the space, to freedom, the board snapped back into place again.

13

There he was, with the wide world before him. And there was the pen, with no opening anywhere to be seen.

With a grunt of delight Grunty Pig trotted out of the low building and found himself on the edge of Farmer Green's orchard.

He noticed that there was a fragrant smell of apples in the air.

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## IV

14

### THE WIDE, WIDE WORLD

It was the first time Grunty Pig had ever been outside his pen. And since he didn't know how long it would be before Farmer Green found him and took him back home, he decided that he had better make the most of his outing while it lasted.

Hurrying into the orchard, Grunty ate heartily of the fruit that lay upon the ground. After he had devoured a few dozen apples he began to lose his appetite for that sort of food. So he started to root beneath the trees. It was fun to dig. Besides, he found a good many tender roots that tickled his taste. They were different from anything he had ever eaten before.

15

After a while Grunty Pig learned something. He had always supposed that he could go on eating forever, if he were only lucky enough to have the chance. But to his surprise he found that there was a limit to the amount he could consume with comfort. He began to have a *tight* feeling about his waistband. At first he dared hope it would go away. But the more he ate, the worse he felt. And at last he gave a grunt of disappointment.

"I can't eat any more," he whined. "Here's a whole world full of food just going to waste. And I can't even hold one half of it!"

Still, there were other pleasures to be had besides eating. Grunty crawled through the fence into the lane. And near the barn, where the cows had trampled, he beheld such beautiful, sticky, deep mud as he had never dreamed could be found anywhere.

16

Grunty Pig gave a deep sigh of happiness as he wallowed in the mire. He lay on his stomach, he turned upon each side. He even squirmed through a puddle and rolled over in it, so that there wasn't a clean patch on him, anywhere. Little did he care that his silvery bristles were smeared with black. The mud felt delightfully cool upon his piggy, pinkish skin.

"This is almost better than eating," Grunty squealed.

At last his gurgles and grunts attracted the notice of a proud creature known as Henrietta Hen. She had been scratching for worms in the farmyard. And now she came running around a corner of the barn and peered through the fence at Grunty.

17

"You careless child!" she squawked. "Stop playing in that mud! Don't you know that it's very dangerous to get your feet wet?"

Grunty Pig stood up and looked at her.

"Goodness! You're a sight!" Henrietta Hen exclaimed. "Does your mother know you're here?"

Now, Grunty Pig didn't answer a single one of Henrietta's questions. He merely stared at her and said nothing. So it was no wonder that she thought him stupid.

"Poor Mrs. Pig!" thought Henrietta Hen. "It's bad enough to have a child so untidy as this youngster. But it's far worse to have a dull-witted one."

Then to Grunty she said sharply, "You'd better get out of that mudhole and go dry yourself in the sun."

He actually obeyed her. And as soon as Henrietta Hen saw that he was sunning himself she walked out of sight around the barn, stopping now and then to pick up some tidbit or other.

"Good!" Grunty Pig grunted. "She's gone. This was the easiest way to get rid of her."

18

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## V

19

### SIXES AND SEVENS

Not until feeding time came did anyone discover that Grunty Pig was gone from the pen. It may seem strange that neither his mother nor any of his brothers and sisters missed him. But when there are seven children in a family it is no wonder that one of them could slip away without having his absence noticed. It is specially easy, in such a large family, to overlook the littlest.

If Mrs. Pig had known there was a loose board on the pen she would certainly have counted noses to find out whether her children were all safe at home. But nobody knew about that loose board except Grunty himself.

It was lucky that Farmer Green had made the lid for Mrs. Pig's children's feeding trough—the lid with the seven holes in it. When he poured the children's supper into the trough and slammed down the lid he stood and watched Mrs. Pig's youngsters as they scrambled to the trough and stuck—each of them—a nose into a hole.

All at once Farmer Green noticed something queer. "Hullo!" he cried to his son Johnnie. "There's an empty hole here. We've lost a pig!"

He looked closely at the row of six squirming bunches of squeals.

"I declare!" said Farmer Green. "It's the runt that's gone."

Mrs. Pig, who was enjoying her own supper a little way off, did not hear what Farmer Green said. Her children were making a good deal of noise. And to tell the truth, Mrs. Pig herself wasn't exactly a silent eater. When Farmer Green jumped into the pen and began to poke at the sides of it she wondered what he was doing. Soon he found the loose board and pushed against it with his foot, exclaiming, "Here's where he got away! Who'd have thought that the runt was the smartest of the family?"

"Run and get me a hammer and a few nails," said Farmer Green to his son Johnnie. "We must fix this pen before any more of the pigs crawl out."

Well, when she heard the news Mrs. Pig nearly choked over a bit of something or other that she was eating. Grunty was gone! If she hadn't spent most of the afternoon dozing perhaps she would have missed him. And poor Mrs. Pig began to reproach herself for what wasn't really her fault at all.

"I hope you'll find him," she told Farmer Green as he drove a nail into the loose board. "I hope you won't leave my son out to-night. There's no knowing what might happen to a child of his tender years."

Maybe Farmer Green heard her request. Anyhow, as he handed the hammer to Johnnie he said, "Come and help me, after you put the hammer back. We'll have to find that pig. If a bear happened to come down from the mountain to-night he'd treat himself to a feast. That runt would make a nice, tender meal."

Mrs. Pig must certainly have heard—and understood—Farmer Green's remark. For she gave a loud squeal of alarm.

"Hurry!" she begged him. "Please, Mr. Green, do find Grunty before dark!"

20

21

22

**MR. CROW HELPS**

It was a wonder that Johnnie Green and his father ever found Grunty Pig.

Soon after Henrietta Hen left him, Grunty crept out of the lane and wandered into the cornfield. He had an idea that Henrietta might go and tell his mother that she had seen him wallowing in the mud behind the barn. And he did not want to be dragged back to the pigpen.

Grunty had no way of knowing that Henrietta Hen forgot all about him before she had crossed the farmyard. She fell into a loud dispute with a neighbor. And she never thought of Grunty again.

Grunty Pig enjoyed his ramble into the field of waving corn. The corn was sweet; and the dirt was loose—just the finest sort to root in that a body could possibly want. He had the place all to himself until at last a black gentleman came flying up in a great hurry and ordered him in a hoarse voice to "get out of the corn—and be quick about it!"

On him Grunty Pig tried the same trick that he had used on Henrietta Hen. He looked up with a stupid stare at the newcomer and said never a word.

Old Mr. Crow—for it was he that had commanded Grunty to leave—old Mr. Crow abused him roundly. Mr. Crow was not empty-headed, like Henrietta Hen. He was not to be deceived so easily.

"Why don't you answer me?" he bawled. "You make noise enough when you're at home. I've heard you often, way across the cornfield." Mr. Crow cawed so angrily that a dozen of his cronies flew over from the woods to see what was going on. And the whole thirteen made such an uproar that Farmer Green couldn't help noticing them. He and Johnnie were in the orchard, hunting for Grunty Pig.

"Those crows are up to some mischief," Farmer Green declared. "You don't suppose—do you?—that they're teasing that pig?"

Well, Johnnie Green was willing to go and find out. And sure enough! he found Grunty in the cornfield.

Johnnie Green picked him up, tucked him under his arm—plastered with dried mud as he was—and brought him in triumph to the barn.

Farmer Green laughed when he saw Grunty Pig.

"He looks as if he had been enjoying himself," he remarked as he dropped Grunty into the pen with the rest of Mrs. Pig's children.

"Are you going to feed him?" Johnnie Green inquired.

Again his father laughed.

"No!" he replied. "That pig has stuffed himself so full he can scarcely waddle."

As for Mrs. Pig, she didn't know whether to laugh or to weep. She was glad to have Grunty safe at home again; but he was a sad sight.

At first Mrs. Pig thought Farmer Green had made a mistake. She thought he had found somebody else's child. For Grunty was so daubed with black mud that she actually didn't know him until she heard him grunt. "Where have you been?" she asked him in her sternest voice.

"I've been out in the world," he answered. "And I've had a fine time."

"It's easy to see," said Mrs. Pig, "that you're a born wallower. It's a pity that you haven't your brother Blackie's complexion. The dirt does show so dreadfully on silver bristles!"

**THE GRUMBLER**

All the farmyard folk agreed that Farmer Green took the best of care of everybody. Mrs. Pig often told her children that they were lucky to have so good a home. And not having lived anywhere else, they never imagined that



anything could be finer than their pen.

After the day when he escaped from the pen, however, Grunty Pig began to complain. He wasn't satisfied with the food that Farmer Green gave him, he grumbled because there was no good place to wallow in mud, and especially did he object because there wasn't a tree to rub against. "The orchard," he often said, "is a much pleasanter place than this pen is. There are trees enough in the orchard for every member of our family to rub against—all at the same time."

29

Somehow, when Grunty talked in that fashion every one of Mrs. Pig's children began to crowd against the sides of the pen. And even Mrs. Pig herself felt an annoying tickling along her back. She did wish that Grunty wouldn't mention such matters.

But nothing Mrs. Pig could say seemed to do any good. He was always prattling, anyhow. She could no more stop his flow of grunts and squeals than she could have kept the water in the brook from babbling down the mountainside to Swift River.

And even more annoying to Mrs. Pig was the way her son Grunty tried to rub his back against *her*. She said "Don't!" to him so often that she became heartily sick of the word.

30

What bothered Mrs. Pig most of all was Grunty's behavior whenever Farmer Green came to the pen. It was mortifying to her to have her son actually try to *scratch his back* against her in the presence of a visitor.

"I do hope," said Mrs. Pig to Farmer Green, "I do hope you don't think that I haven't tried to teach this child better manners." And then, when all the rest of her family began to squirm and fidget against the sides of the pen she added with a sigh, "Look at them! Anyone would suppose they had had no bringing up at all!"

Farmer Green smiled as he leaned over the pen and watched the antics of Grunty Pig and his brothers and sisters.

"There's something that I can do for your family to make them happier," he told Mrs. Pig. "To-morrow—if I can spare the time—I'll make a change here. A lady who's raising such a fine family as yours deserves the best there is. She ought to have a home with every modern improvement."

31

"There!" Mrs. Pig exclaimed to her children as soon as Farmer Green left them. "Did you hear what he said? Farmer Green is a kind man. I shouldn't have blamed him if he had put us into the poorest pen on the place, after seeing your unmannerly actions. You'll have to behave better—especially after we have our new improvements."

Well, the next day Farmer Green brought a stout post and set it firmly in the center of Mrs. Pig's pen.

"That's for you and your family to rub against," he informed Mrs. Pig.

Really, he needn't have explained what the improvement was for. No sooner had he climbed out of the pen than Mrs. Pig and her children began to put the rubbing post to good use. Grunty was the first of all to try it. And to his mother's delight, he stopped grumbling at once. Nor did he ever again disgrace her by scratching his back against her. Instead, he always walked up to the rubbing post like a little gentleman. At least, that was what Mrs. Pig said.

32



**The Muley Cow Advises Grunty Pig to Go Home.**

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## VIII

### FEARFUL NEWS

There came a day at last when Farmer Green gave Mrs. Pig and her family a great treat. He let them out of their pen and turned them loose in a little yard out of doors. Such gruntings and squealings hadn't been heard on the farm for a long time. It was just like a picnic. And everybody had the finest of times. Still, Grunty Pig wasn't content to stay in the yard with the rest of the family. It wasn't long before he found a hole in the fence big enough to wriggle through. And off he went. And he was actually glad, for once, that he was the littlest of the family. There wasn't another of Mrs. Pig's children that could squeeze through the opening.

Grunty Pig trotted the whole length of the lane. When he reached the pasture he found himself face to face with the Muley Cow, who acted much surprised to see him there.

"You'd better go back home at once," she advised him. "There are bears on Blue Mountain. Sometimes they come down this way. Only last week I had an adventure with one in the back pasture." She did not tell Grunty that she had run away from Cuffy Bear, down the hillside. "A bear," said the Muley Cow, "would be delighted to meet a tender little pig like you."

Grunty Pig did not even thank the Muley Cow for warning him.

"I'd like to meet a bear," he declared stoutly. "I hope I'll meet one to-day."

Leaving the Muley Cow, he zigzagged up the hill through the pasture, stopping now and then to dig up many a juicy root.

Although Mrs. Pig missed her runaway son after a time, she was not greatly disturbed.

"He can't be far off," she thought. "He'll come back before dark." And when Grunty did at last come crawling into the little yard Mrs. Pig was merely vexed with him for having gone off without her consent. She was just about to give him a well deserved scolding. But before she could speak to him, Grunty greeted her with a loud squeal.

"I saw a bear in the pasture!" he cried.

Mrs. Pig promptly forgot her displeasure. Although her son was certainly unharmed, she couldn't help being startled. It gave her what she called "a turn" to learn that Grunty had met a bear.

36

"A bear!" Mrs. Pig gasped. "A bear is a terribly dangerous creature. It's a wonder that you ever got home.... What did you do when you saw him?" Mrs. Pig demanded.

"I walked away," said Grunty.

"He couldn't have noticed you," Mrs. Pig declared. "If you had squealed it would have been the end of you."

Grunty Pig felt that he was the most important member of the family. Not one of his brothers or sisters had ever seen a bear. At least they had never claimed to have enjoyed so fearsome a sight.

"It was nothing," he boasted. "I'd as soon meet a bear as the Muley Cow."

His mother, however, was of another mind. She kept looking about in an uneasy fashion.

37

"I wish Farmer Green would come and put us into our pen," she murmured. "It will soon be dark. And I shouldn't like to spend the night out here—not with a bear in the neighborhood."

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## IX

38

### A GREAT ADVENTURE

The next outing that Farmer Green gave Mrs. Pig's family in the little yard proved to be anything but a picnic—for Mrs. Pig. That poor lady had a dreadful time. Grunty ran away again. And he hadn't been gone long before his mother heard a loud squealing in the nearest field. The sound rapidly grew louder. And as she stood still and listened, Mrs. Pig knew that it was Grunty's squeal and that he was drawing nearer every moment.

"Dear me!" she cried. "He must be in trouble."

Soon Grunty tumbled through the fence. And scrambling to his feet he ran to his mother, crying at the top of his voice, "A bear chased me!"

39

"Oh! Oh!" shrieked Mrs. Pig. "It's a mercy he didn't catch you. Oh! Oh! It's lucky you're no fatter, else you couldn't have run so fast." Being more than fat, herself, and greatly excited, Mrs. Pig had to stop talking for a time, because she gurgled and wheezed and panted in a most alarming fashion.

At last, when she had somewhat recovered from her flurry, she called to Grunty. And looking at him severely Mrs. Pig said to him, "Let this be a lesson to you. Never, never stray away from the farmyard again!"

"Yes, Mother!" was Grunty's glib reply. Then he sidled away. Somehow he felt uneasy under his mother's gaze.

"Perhaps it was a good thing, after all, that the bear chased him," Mrs. Pig muttered. "Maybe this fright will keep him at home."

40

She soon discovered that it would take more than a mere fright—more than a command—to stop Grunty from running away. For it wasn't long before she missed him again.

If Mrs. Pig hadn't been so upset she might have been vexed—and with good reason.

"Oh! that dear little Grunty!" she wailed. "The bear may have caught him already, in the cabbage patch."

Then piercing squeals fell once more on Mrs. Pig's ears.

"Dear! Dear!" she cried. "I ought to have watched him. I ought to have kept an eye on Grunty. After all, he's little more than a baby."

Again the squeals grew louder. Again Grunty Pig burst through the hole in the fence and romped up to his mother.

41

"He chased me another time!" he grunted. "The bear chased me almost as far as the fence."

"Sakes alive!" his mother shrieked. "Somebody ought to tell Farmer Green! This farm is not a safe place to live, with a bear prowling about it."

"Do you want me to go and tell Mr. Green?" Grunty inquired.

"*You?*" his mother exclaimed. "No, indeed! You stay right here with me! Don't you dare stir out of this yard!" And to Grunty's astonishment, Mrs. Pig bowled him right over, to show him that she meant what she said.

He jumped to his feet in a jiffy. And he was all ready to slink away into a corner of the yard; but his mother bade him wait.

42

"This bear—" she said—"what did he look like?"

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## X

43

### A QUEER BEAR

Grunty Pig's little eyes fell away from his mother's when she asked him what the bear looked like—the bear that had chased him.

"Er—he was whitish, with brown spots, like Johnnie Green's dog," said Grunty; "and—er—he had a long tail like the old horse Ebenezer's; and he had six legs."

Mrs. Pig suddenly made a most peculiar sound. It couldn't be called a squeal, nor a grunt, nor a gurgle, nor a gasp. It was a little like all four. And springing clumsily upon her son, Mrs. Pig upset him before he could dodge her.

Grunty Pig began to whimper. "What have I done?" he whined.

44

"You've deceived me!" his mother cried. "You haven't seen a bear. You've never seen a bear in all your life."

"Ouch," Grunty howled, as his mother sent him sprawling once more. "I didn't mean any harm. I was only having fun with you."

"Well," said his mother. "Turn about is fair play. I'll have a little fun with *you*, now."

Mrs. Pig gave her wayward son such a punishing that he remembered it all the rest of that day. At least, he stayed at home. And Mrs. Pig dared hope that at last she had cured him of two bad habits—running away and telling fibs.

The next day, however, the fields called again to Grunty Pig. They called so plainly that he couldn't resist answering.

"I'll slip away for just a little while," he said to himself. "If I'm not gone long no one will miss me." So when his mother was taking a nap he stole through the hole in the fence. "I'll be back before she wakes up," he chuckled.

45

In the garden, up the lane, through the pasture he made his way. And he enjoyed his holiday to the full—until he remembered suddenly that he had been gone a long time—a much longer time than he had planned to spend away from the farmyard.

"Oh, dear!" he whined. "Mother must be awake now; and she'll punish me if I go back." The more he thought about returning, the less he liked the idea.

"I won't go home at all!" he cried at last. "I'll stay in the pasture the rest of my life. There's plenty to eat here; and plenty of fun, too."

It was afternoon when Grunty Pig made up his mind that he would never go home. When the Muley Cow warned him once more to beware of the bears he actually jeered at her.

46

"There are no bears in Pleasant Valley," he scoffed. "And you needn't trouble yourself to mention them again to me. I'm going to live in this pasture and there's no use of your trying to frighten me away."

The Muley Cow said nothing more to him. She merely looked at him and smiled wisely.

"He'll sing a different song," she thought, "when it begins to grow dark."

## LOCKED OUT

The Muley Cow was right. She had said to herself, with a smile, that Grunty Pig, the runaway, would be glad enough to go home when night came. He had decided to stay right there in the pasture for the rest of his life, where there was plenty to eat and plenty to do. He felt sure that he would have a much pleasanter time there than at home. For one thing, he knew well enough that there was a punishing waiting for him at the piggery—if he ever went back to get it.

Not until Johnnie Green and old dog Spot came to the pasture to drive the cows down the lane did Grunty Pig begin to feel the least twinge of homesickness. And even then he tried to forget it. He hid in a clump of brakes near the fence while Johnnie Green and Spot were in the pasture, for he didn't want them to spy him and take him home with them.

There was a delicious, damp, woodsy smell in the cool shade of his hiding place.

"How much nicer this is than our stuffy pen!" Grunty exclaimed under his breath.

Now and then he peeped out to watch the procession of cows moving slowly towards the barn to be milked. And when the last one had entered the lane, hurrying to catch up with the rest—and to avoid Spot's nips at her heels—Grunty crept out into the open.

Then, strange to say, he hurried towards the lane himself. All at once the pasture seemed a great, lonesome place. Who knew when a bear might rise out of a clump of bushes near him?

He was careful not to follow too closely after the herd as they meandered down the lane. At the same time, he was careful not to fall too far behind. And he took many a quick backward glance, to make sure no bear was creeping up on him.

Not far from the barn Grunty left the lane and hurried toward the little yard outside the piggery, where he had run away from his mother and his brothers and his sisters.

When he reached the fence through which he had crept while Mrs. Pig was enjoying a nap, he met with a great surprise. The hole in the fence was no more! Somebody had mended it. And there he was, outside the yard!

Grunty Pig squealed for his mother. But no one answered. The fence was too high for him to look over it. It was too tight for him to peep through.

"I want to get in!" Grunty cried. "Why doesn't somebody answer?"

The silence from the other side of the fence was dreadful. Grunty Pig would have been *glad* to have his mother scold him then, just for the comfort of hearing her voice.

"Oh! Oh!" he wailed. "What shall I do? Whatever shall I do? Farmer Green must have put the family back in the pen. And I'll have to spend the night out here alone!"

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## XII

## WOOF!

Night found Grunty Pig huddled close to the outside of the piggery. Many times he had walked around the low building, snuffing at the doors and trying in vain to find some opening through which he might crawl. To his dismay, all was snug and tight. There wasn't a hole big enough even for Miss Kitty Cat to creep through.

Though Grunty had called a good many times, nobody had answered him. Inside the piggery, in their pen, Mrs. Pig and her other children were sound asleep. Now and then Grunty could hear a throaty snore, which he knew to be his mother's.

"How can she sleep, when I'm missing?" he cried.

Now, Mrs. Pig had been much upset by Grunty's absence. And when Farmer Green came to put her family into the piggery for the night she had tried to explain to him that Grunty had run away. Unfortunately, it happened that Farmer Green was in a great hurry. He didn't stop to find out what was troubling Mrs. Pig, but hustled her and her children inside and closed all the doors.

Try as she would, Mrs. Pig hadn't been able to stay awake. Her eyes would close, in spite of all she could do. Though she slept, she dreamed about the truant Grunty. Now and then she cried aloud in the darkness, when some terrible creature seemed to be chasing him. But Mrs. Pig never quite waked up.

Once Grunty Pig thought he heard his mother speak his name. And he called out in as brave a voice as he could muster, "Here I am, just outside the piggery! Won't somebody please let me in?"

53

He called in vain. At last he fell asleep, for he was about as tired as any little pig could be.

In the middle of the night Grunty Pig awoke with a start. Somebody said "Woof!" And somebody came sniffing and snuffing around the corner of the piggery. Dimly Grunty could see a dark, burly form. And he was so frightened that he bawled right out, "It's a bear! It's a bear! It's a bear!"

Almost at the same instant old dog Spot ran out of his kennel, barking furiously. And like magic the prowler—whoever he was—vanished into the night.

"Keep still!" Grunty's mother called to him; for the noise had half roused her. "Don't you mention the word *bear* again, or I'll attend to you in the morning."

54

Drowsy as she was, Mrs. Pig actually thought Grunty was right there in the pen with the rest of her children. And in no time at all she was snoring again.

Grunty Pig didn't dare open his mouth nor close his eyes the rest of the night. And when morning came, Farmer Green found him huddled against the door of the piggery.

It was a joyful meeting—for Grunty Pig.

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### XIII

55

#### HOME AT LAST

"What's this?" Farmer Green exclaimed, when he went to unlock the piggery in the morning and found Grunty Pig lying up against the door. "Did you get locked out last night? Was it you that old Spot was barking at?"

Grunty Pig didn't dare answer. When Farmer Green dropped him into the pen he said nothing to anybody—not even "Good morning!"

A little later Farmer Green found something more outside the piggery. In the loose dirt he discovered—bear tracks!

"Aha!" he cried to his son Johnnie. "Look here! We had a visitor last night. It was no wonder old Spot woke us all up. A bear called on us! And he'd certainly have had that pig if Spot hadn't scared him off."

56

Naturally the news soon spread all over the farmyard. And when Mrs. Pig heard it she began to tremble.

"To think," she quavered, "that my littlest child spent the night out of doors, with a bear prowling about the neighborhood! And I slept through it all!"

"Tell me all about it, Grunty!" she commanded that young gentleman.

It is not surprising that Grunty Pig was puzzled. Hadn't his mother told him, during the night, not to mention the word *bear* again? And now she was urging him to talk about that very animal.

"Squeak up!" said his mother sharply—which was the same as saying, "Speak up!"

57

So he told his story. And when he had finished Mrs. Pig fairly covered him with caresses.

"It seems to me—" she sniffed—for she was quite upset—"it seems to me that I remember your saying something about a bear last night. But I wasn't wide

awake at the time. And I thought you were fibbing again.

"Perhaps," she added, "this will teach you a few things that you needed to learn.... *Always mind your mother!*" said Mrs. Pig. "And *always tell the truth!*"

Her children all repeated the words after her. And Grunty Pig's voice could have been heard plainly above all the rest.

His mother looked at him fondly. She had always claimed that she had no favorite among her children. But now she couldn't help thinking what a promising youngster Grunty was, even if he was the runt of the family.

"That's a good Grunty," said Mrs. Pig. "You won't forget this lesson, will you?"

"No, Mother!" Grunty answered.

Now, that very afternoon Mrs. Pig took it into her head to have her children say the morning's lesson again. So she called her youngsters together. And she asked Grunty the first of all to recite what she had taught him.

"I think it was something about a bear," he stammered, "but I can't remember exactly."

"Dear me!" said poor Mrs. Pig. "I don't know what I'll do with this lad."

Then she asked the other children, one by one, what they had learned that very morning.

There wasn't one of them that hadn't forgotten everything.

"Dear me!" said unhappy Mrs. Pig. "I don't know what I'll do with all of them. But I'll treat them all alike. I have no favorite. There isn't one of them that's stupider than another."

When Grunty Pig heard that he felt quite proud. It was something, anyhow, to be as stupid as the rest, even if he was smaller.

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## XIV

### AN ODD THOUGHT

"Umph! Umph!"

Farmer Green had fenced off a piece of the old orchard. And into this new yard he turned Mrs. Pig's children.

"Umph! Umph!"

They had a fine time there, rooting down under the sod, rubbing their backs against the trunks of the old apple trees, and sprawling in the shade when they were sleepy.

"Umph! Umph!"

Sometimes an apple dropped from a tree. And then there was a mad scramble.

"Umph! Umph!"

"Dear me!" said Jolly Robin's wife as she sat in the apple tree where she and her husband had a nest every summer. "Don't Mrs. Pig's children make a dreadful noise? I never knew half-grown pigs to have such loud voices. Their grunts certainly are full-sized."

Jolly Robin, who had perched himself beside his wife, looked down at their new neighbors.

"They're having a good time," he observed cheerfully. "We ought not to complain. We may be thankful that they don't climb trees and try to sing."

Jolly Robin had a way of looking on the bright side of things. It was seldom that he couldn't act cheerful. Even when he felt quite downhearted, *inside*, he managed usually to appear happy, *outside*. And now his remark put his wife in a pleasanter frame of mind.

"Imagine a pig up a tree!" Mrs. Robin tittered.

"Umph! Umph! Are you talking about me?" a voice inquired right beneath them. It gave Mrs. Robin such a start that she almost tumbled off the limb.

"No! No! We're not talking about you—not exactly!" Jolly Robin answered.

It was Grunty Pig that had spoken.

"Pardon me!" he said. "I thought I heard you mention the name, 'Pig'."

"Er—yes! We did speak of your family, in a general way," Jolly Robin admitted.

"Ah!" said Grunty Pig. "And what was it you said about us? Weren't you and your wife laughing about our climbing trees?"

Somehow Jolly Robin thought that Grunty's little eyes had a spiteful gleam as he looked upward into the tree top. And Mrs. Robin couldn't help moving to a higher limb. Grunty's glare sent a most uncomfortable shiver over her.

63

Jolly Robin tried his best to act at his ease.

"It was just an odd thought that popped into my head," he assured Grunty Pig. "It made Mrs. Robin giggle when I mentioned it." He laughed merrily enough. And his wife managed to smile faintly. But Grunty Pig frowned.

"I thought so!" he cried. "You Robins were poking fun at me and my brothers and sisters. Yes! And no doubt at my mother, too!"

"Oh, no!" Jolly Robin assured him. "We weren't thinking of any one in particular."

"Aha!" Grunty snorted. "You were laughing at all of us, then." And Jolly Robin could say nothing to change his opinion. "You can't fool me," Grunty declared. "You have insulted my whole family. And it's time that you learned better manners. I see that I shall have to teach you a lesson."

64

Well, when they heard that speech Jolly Robin and his wife had to laugh. The idea of a lesson in manners from Grunty Pig was the funniest thing on the farm.



**"Always Mind Your Mother," Said Mrs. Pig.**

*(Page 57)*



## GRUNTY MEANS MISCHIEF

Jolly Robin and his wife told all their friends that Grunty Pig was going to teach them a lesson. The birds had many a laugh over the matter. Not till old Mr. Crow visited the orchard one day did the Robin family cease chuckling over what they called "the joke of the season."

"Don't laugh too soon!" Mr. Crow croaked. "This Grunty Pig means mischief. He isn't going to teach you the sort of lesson you've been snickering about. What he intends to do is to harm you in some way."

Now, nobody in Pleasant Valley could look gloomier than old Mr. Crow. And when he hinted darkly, in his hoarse way, that there was trouble ahead for the Robin family, he threw Jolly Robin's wife into a flutter.

66

"Oh, what does Grunty Pig mean to do to us?" Mrs. Robin quavered.

"I'd rather not tell you," said old Mr. Crow. "I don't want you to worry."

Mr. Crow left them then. Of course he couldn't have chosen a better way to upset Mrs. Robin. Even Jolly himself had to admit after a while that he could think of nothing that seemed to cheer his wife in the least. "I'll speak to Mr. Crow again," he told his wife. "I'll ask him just what he meant."

Alas! Mr. Crow couldn't tell him. The truth was that Mr. Crow had already told all he knew.

"I'll ask Grunty Pig himself what he means to do to us," Jolly then declared to his wife. "I've noticed that he digs every day at the foot of our apple tree. The next time he comes here I'll have a talk with him." So that very day Jolly put his question to Grunty Pig.

67

"What is it," he asked, "that you intend to do to us?"

"You'll find out later," said Grunty Pig. "I expect to be in the top of your apple tree before fall. And then—"

Jolly Robin couldn't wait for him to finish. He had to laugh right out, on the spot. And his wife, who had been listening eagerly, burst into the first giggle that had passed her bill for days and days.

So Grunty Pig expected to climb a tree! Mr. and Mrs. Robin gave each other a merry look. It was all too funny for words.

"Umph!" said Grunty Pig. "You won't laugh when I'm in your tree top."

68

"How are you going to get up here?" Jolly Robin asked him, with a wink at Mrs. Robin. "Are you going to *fly*?"

"No!" Grunty Pig said. "No!"

"Then you're going to *climb*," cried Mrs. Robin. And both she and her husband choked, as they pictured fat Grunty Pig scrambling up the trunk of the old apple tree.

"No!" Grunty Pig said. "No!"

"Well, well!" Jolly Robin exclaimed. "Don't be so short with your answers! Explain how you expect to get up into the top of our apple tree."

"I never said I expected to get up there," Grunty Pig corrected him.

"What?" cried Jolly Robin. "What?" cried his wife.

"No!" said Grunty Pig. "I said I'd be in the tree top before fall. If I work here every day around the foot of the tree I'll have it uprooted at last. And when it topples over and falls on the ground I'll have no trouble getting into the top of it."

69

When they heard that, Jolly Robin and his wife stopped laughing.

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## XVI

70

### DANGER AHEAD

Jolly Robin and his wife were terribly worried. Grunty Pig meant to uproot the apple tree where they had their nest. Every day he came and dug at the foot of the tree. Every day, just before he went away, he looked up at them and said, "I hope you'll sleep well to-night. You'd better enjoy your home while you

have it, for the tree will be flat on the ground before fall."

Sleep! Mrs. Robin complained that she never had a good night's rest any more. She said that she had bad dreams. She dreamed that the tree was falling. And then she was sure to wake up with a start. And her husband wasn't there to calm her, because he was roosting in a thicket over in the pasture with their first brood of the season.

71

They both agreed—Jolly and his wife—that they must get their second brood of children out of the nest as soon as they could.

"The moment they're old enough, we must teach them to fly," Mrs. Robin told her husband.

"Yes!" he said. "And we'll have to be careful of them, too, with all these seven young porkers in the orchard."

"Suppose—" said Mrs. Robin—"suppose Grunty Pig should bring our tree toppling to the ground before the children leave the nest!"

"Oh! There's no danger of that," Jolly assured her. She was always looking on the dark side of things. But he didn't tell her so.

72

"I don't know how we're going to be sure the children are safe," Mrs. Robin continued. "How long do you think it will take Grunty Pig to uproot our tree?"

Jolly Robin had to confess that he couldn't answer his wife's question.

"Then ask somebody who knows something about such matters!" Mrs. Robin cried. And there was a tart note in her voice that made Jolly Robin say hastily, "Yes! Yes, my dear! I'll go right now and find an answer to your question."

Off he flew. And not knowing where else to go, he sat down on a bush in Farmer Green's garden, to ponder. Who could tell him how long it would take Grunty Pig to uproot the old apple tree? Although Jolly Robin thought and thought, he could think of no one whom he might ask. To be sure, there was Tommy Fox, who was known to be an able digger. But Jolly Robin didn't trust him. Tommy Fox was tricky. And there was Billy Woodchuck, who came from a famous family of burrowers. But everybody knew that old dog Spot had chased him into his hole that very afternoon, and was watching Billy's front door.

73

While Jolly Robin sat there in the garden he happened to look down at the ground. And right before his eyes a long snout suddenly rose out of the dirt, followed by the squat form of Grandfather Mole.

Jolly Robin gave a cheerful chirp. Everybody knew that Grandfather Mole was the champion digger of Pleasant Valley. And if he couldn't answer Mrs. Robin's question, then no one could.

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## XVII

74

### A PUZZLE SOLVED

"Good morning, Grandfather Mole!" Jolly Robin called.

"What!" cried Grandfather Mole. "Have I made the mistake again of coming up on top of Farmer Green's garden?"

"You certainly have," Jolly told him.

"I must be getting old," said Grandfather Mole. "I'm growing more careless every day. I didn't mean to dig my way above ground." And then, thrusting his long nose right into the dirt, he began to burrow out of sight.

"Stop! Please stop!" Jolly Robin besought him. "I want to ask you a question about digging."

75

Grandfather Mole pulled his nose out of the ground.

"What's your question?" he inquired.

"It's about Grunty Pig," Jolly Robin began.

"I thought you said it was about digging," Grandfather Mole grumbled. And he started to burrow once more.

"So it is!" Jolly exclaimed. "I want to know how long it will take Grunty Pig to dig up the apple tree where I live."

Again Grandfather Mole paused.

"It all depends," he muttered. "It all depends on how much of his time he spends at digging."

"He works every day," said Jolly Robin. "A good, long while every day!"

Grandfather Mole appeared to be thinking deeply.

"He boasts—" Jolly Robin explained—"he boasts that he will have the tree uprooted before fall." 76

"Nonsense!" Grandfather Mole snorted. "If Grunty Pig says that, he doesn't know much about apple trees. He may be a fair digger; but he must be stupid."

"That's what I've always thought!" Jolly Robin exclaimed.

"He can't go very deep into things, or he'd never have made such a boast," Grandfather Mole declared. "When Grunty Pig digs, does he dig right down out of sight?"

"Oh, no! Never!" said Jolly Robin.

"Ah! He merely scratches the surface!" Grandfather Mole remarked with a wise nod of his head. "Well, it's no wonder that he made such a mistake."

"Mistake!" Jolly Robin echoed. "Do you mean that Grunty Pig won't have our apple tree down by fall?" 77

"I do," Grandfather Mole answered. "The roots of a big, old apple tree spread out a good rod in every direction. And it would take a hundred Grunty Pigs a whole summer to dig them free."

A broad smile spread over Jolly Robin's face.

"Then—" he ventured—"then wouldn't it take Grunty Pig a hundred summers to dig up our tree, if he worked alone?"

"No doubt!" Grandfather replied. "Or, to be on the safe side, I'll say he could uproot your tree in ninety-nine summers."

"Hurrah!" Jolly Robin shouted. "Hurrah—and thank you, Grandfather Mole!" And leaving the old gentleman to dig himself out of sight, Jolly Robin hurried home to his wife.

Mrs. Robin was glad to see him. She knew, as soon as she caught a glimpse of his face, that he had good news for her. And she needed cheering, poor soul! For Grunty Pig was beneath the tree again, digging away in a most businesslike fashion. 78

"Let him dig!" Jolly Robin whispered to his wife. "Grandfather Mole says it will take him ninety-nine summers to topple our tree over. And you know that Grandfather Mole is the greatest burrower in Pleasant Valley."

Mrs. Robin felt better at once. Looking down at Grunty Pig, she said to her husband, "How stupid this son of Mrs. Pig's is! He has turned up at least a dozen angleworms while you've been gone. And he has let every one of them get away from him!"

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## XVIII

79

### THE LUCKIEST OF ALL

Grunty Pig found that being the smallest of the family wasn't all fun. Not only could his brothers and sisters crowd him at the feeding trough. Even when they were playing in the pen they often knocked him down and walked right over him. And if he objected—as he usually did—they were sure to laugh and call him "Runt."

Try as she would, Mrs. Pig couldn't rid her children of these boorish ways. But she shouldn't be blamed for that. It must be remembered that she had seven youngsters, all of the same age.

At least, Mrs. Pig did what she could to make Grunty's lot easier. 80

"Don't feel unhappy!" she said to him one day as he picked himself up, whimpering, after a hard knock. "Don't feel unhappy because you are the littlest of the family. In one way you are the luckiest of all my children."

Grunty Pig didn't stop weeping. He saw no reason—yet—to feel more cheerful.

"Did you know—" his mother asked him—"did you know that in one respect you are the handsomest one of the whole litter? You have the curliest tail of them all!"

Grunty Pig gazed, open-mouthed, at his mother. He stopped snivelling. Up to that time he had scarcely given his tail a thought. So long as it followed him wherever he went he had been satisfied with it.



**Grunty Pig Stuck Fast in the Fence.**

*(Page 86)*

From that moment Grunty began to think a great deal about his tail. He was always turning his head to look at it, to make sure it hadn't lost any of its kink. Now and then he was even late for a meal, because he was feasting his eyes on his tail when Farmer Green came to the pen with food for Mrs. Pig's family.

81

It must be confessed that Grunty sometimes boasted before his brothers and sisters about his beautiful curly tail. And just before meal time his brother Blackie was known, upon occasion, to mention the subject of tails. He did that in the hope that Grunty would be late at the feeding trough.

Sad to say, Grunty Pig was fast becoming vain. He even talked about tails with the neighbors, taking pains to explain that his own was the handsomest one on the farm.

Old dog Spot sniffed when Grunty boasted about his tail one day.

82

"Why, your tail is of no use whatsoever," Spot told him. "You can't use it to switch a fly off your back. The Muley Cow can do that. And so can the old horse, Ebenezer."

"Ah! But my tail is so pretty to look at!" Grunty Pig exclaimed.

"You can't puff it up to show you're angry, as Miss Kitty Cat does," said Spot.

"Ah! But my tail has a beautiful curl!" said Grunty Pig.

"You can't wag it, to let folks know you're friendly, as I can," said Spot.

## XIX

### DOG SPOT'S PLAN

When Grunty Pig insisted that his own tightly curled tail was the most beautiful one in the neighborhood, old dog Spot yawned.

"If that's the case," he remarked, "I should think you'd want your tail where you could see it more easily. Don't you find it a nuisance to have to turn your head around every time you want to look at your tail?"

Grunty Pig admitted that his tail wasn't in the most convenient place in the world.

"If Farmer Green should cut off your tail and nail it up on the outside of the barn," old Spot suggested, "you could look at it easily enough. And it would give others a better chance to see it, too. Even the people that drive along the road could enjoy it. Everybody spoke about the tall corn that we nailed to the barn last fall. And I'm sure that folks would admire your tail."

When Spot spoke of Farmer Green's cutting off his tail, Grunty Pig winced. But as the old dog talked on and on Grunty forgot the painful part of the plan.

"There's no doubt," he agreed, "that my tail would be a fine sight, fastened up on the barn where everybody could gaze at it. But don't you think, Mr. Spot, that I'd look very queer without any tail?"

"N—no!" Spot told him. "N—no! I've seen plenty of pigs without tails. They didn't look queer at all. Really, they looked better without tails than they would have looked with them."

Grunty Pig had listened carefully to what Spot said. Yet somehow he couldn't quite make up his mind to part with his beautiful tail, even if it would delight many more people when nailed to the outside of the barn.

"I'd like to see one of those pigs," he said to Spot. "I'd like to see how they look."

"That's easily arranged," old Spot told him. "I can show you a dozen of them—all as pink and white and happy as they can be. And not a single one of them with a tail!"

"I'd certainly like to see them," Grunty Pig murmured.

"They're a pretty sight," Spot assured him. "Don't you think you'd feel uncomfortable if you appeared before them with a tail? Don't you want to have yours cut off *before* you go to see these tailless little fellows? It seems to me you'd be more at your ease. It would certainly be *polite* of you."

Grunty Pig, however, cared little for politeness. He said that nobody was polite to him. His brothers—and even his sisters—were always knocking him down and trampling on him.

"Very well!" said Spot. "Squirm through that fence and follow me."

It was a tight squeeze. When Grunty Pig was half through the hole in the fence he found himself stuck fast. He could move neither forward nor back. "Oh, dear!" he wailed. "What shall I do?"

"Keep perfectly still!" old dog Spot cautioned him—as if Grunty Pig could do anything else. "I'll jump the fence and help you."

Now, Grunty Pig thought that old Spot intended to give him a push. Instead, Spot nipped him smartly.

It was exactly the sort of help that Grunty needed. He gave a frantic plunge forward and fell, sprawling, on the ground outside the yard, where Spot soon joined him.

"It takes old Spot to hurry 'em along," said the old dog gleefully.

Grunty Pig said "Umph! Umph!"

Old dog Spot was not quite sure what he meant.

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## A NEW KIND OF PIG

"Stop grunting and squealing and follow me!" old dog Spot growled. And Grunty Pig, who had just tumbled through a hole in the fence, scrambled to his feet and trotted after his guide.

Old Spot had promised to show Grunty a dozen pink and white pigs, all without tails. He wanted Grunty to see how handsome they looked.

"You'll like them," Spot told Grunty over his shoulder as they jogged across the farmyard. "You'll ask Farmer Green this very day to cut off your tail and nail it up on the barn. I tell you, these pigs look *neat*. There's *style* about them."

"Umph! Umph!" said Grunty Pig as he shuffled along behind.

"Now, I wonder what he meant by that!" Spot mused. It was sometimes hard to tell whether Grunty's *umphs* stood for *yes* or *no*.

Around the corner of the farmhouse, near the woodshed door, old dog Spot came to a halt before a two-storied cage, the front of which was covered with fine-meshed wire netting.

Stopping beside Spot, Grunty Pig peered inside the cage. He saw a number of odd little creatures running about upon the sawdust-strewn floor of the tiny house, one or another of them giving a faint squeak now and then as if ordering the two unmasked callers to move on.

Whoever they were, they were a bright-eyed little family. But Grunty Pig thought, as he stared at them, that they had a most peculiar look. There seemed to be something missing about them. Yet he couldn't tell just what it was.

Together Grunty and Spot stood there, silent, for a time; until at last Grunty said, "Come along! Let's not stay here any longer. I want to see those twelve pigs without tails."

Old dog Spot snorted.

"You *want* to see them!" he cried. "Well, nobody's stopping you. They're right here in front of you!"

Grunty Pig's mouth fell open—he was so astonished. He knew, now, what made the little, pudgy, white strangers look so queer. There wasn't one of them that had even a hint of a tail!

Then all at once Grunty turned angrily upon old dog Spot.

"These aren't pigs!" he squealed. "You needn't think you can fool me. They're not pigs at all."

"Oh, yes—they are!" Spot insisted. "You didn't suppose that all the pigs in the world were exactly like your family—did you?"

Grunty didn't know what to say. He looked at the odd little creatures again. And then he looked at Spot once more.

"If these really are pigs," he faltered, "they must be very, very young. They're certainly smaller than any day-old pigs I ever saw.... Maybe their tails haven't sprouted yet."

Old dog Spot seemed to choke over something. He turned his head away for a moment or two before he spoke.

"These pigs," he said, "won't ever have tails. Not one of them would know what to do with a tail if you gave him one. They don't want tails. They have no use for them. And now that you see for yourself how happy they are without tails, you ought not to delay any longer about having yours cut off. I hope," Spot added, "I'll see your tail nailed up on the barn to-morrow, where everybody can admire it."

Then Grunty Pig said something that surprised him.

"Why don't you have your own tail cut off?" he asked old Spot.

And before old Spot could think of an answer, Johnnie Green came running out of the woodshed.

"Get away from my guinea pigs!" he shouted.

Grunty and Spot both turned and ran in opposite directions. Grunty didn't see

Spot again for more than a week. When they did at last meet, old Spot never mentioned tails at all. To tell the truth, he seemed to feel somewhat ashamed of himself for having tried to play a trick on Grunty Pig.

93

Or maybe he felt ashamed because he was caught at it.

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## XXI

94

### BEECHNUTS

Down the hill, a little way from Farmer Green's house, a great beech tree stood beside the road. In the fall, when the nuts were ripe, Johnnie Green often visited the tree. And so did Frisky Squirrel. And so, likewise, did that noisy rascal, Jasper Jay. They liked beechnuts—all three. And somehow they got the notion that the beech tree belonged to them—and to nobody else.

One fine, crisp fall day when Johnnie Green was in school, a fourth nut-lover wandered down the road, stopped right between the wheel tracks, and sniffed. It was Grunty Pig. "I smell beechnuts!" he cried with a joyful squeal. And crashing into the light underbrush along the roadside, he began to search among the fallen leaves with his long nose.

95

Soon Grunty came upon a cluster of the three-sided nuts, clinging inside a bur that the frost had split open. He ate the sweet nuts, shells and all. And with many a grunt of delight he grubbed beneath the tree from which the nuts had fallen. His keen nose led him to burs that Johnnie Green had trampled over that very morning, and missed.

"I wonder—" said Grunty Pig aloud—"I wonder why nobody ever told me about this beech tree."

"Perhaps it was because you are a pig," said a voice right over his head.

He looked up. And there on a low branch sat Frisky Squirrel. Grunty knew him; he had sometimes seen him around Farmer Green's corncrib.

96

"Of course I'm a Pig," Grunty retorted. "I'm Mrs. Pig's son."

"Well, Mrs. Pig's son, I notice that you have helped yourself freely to beechnuts."

"I've eaten all I could find," Grunty told Frisky with a grin.

"I don't hear any thanks," Frisky Squirrel remarked. "Don't you know that these beechnuts belong to me and Jasper Jay and Johnnie Green?"

"Umph!"

"You did?" Frisky inquired.

"Umph!"

"Oh, you didn't!" Frisky exclaimed. "Then I suppose I shall have to pardon you. But Jasper Jay wouldn't, if he caught you taking any of the nuts that fall from this tree."

There was truth in what Frisky said. Even as he spoke a patch of blue flashed in the top of the beech tree. And a harsh voice sang out, "What's going on here?"

97

Jasper Jay had arrived.

Grunty Pig, however, did not even give Jasper a glance. Instead, he began nosing about for another beechnut bur.

For a moment or two Jasper Jay watched him. And then Jasper began to squawk.

"Stop that!" he ordered. "Don't you dare to take any of our beechnuts!"

"Umph!" said Grunty Pig. "I can't find any more on the ground. So I suppose I shall have to obey him," Grunty muttered half under his breath.

"Don't mumble! Speak up!" cried Jasper Jay. "If you have any excuses to make, let's hear them!"

## JASPER JAY OBJECTS

While Jasper Jay, in the beech tree, waited for Grunty Pig, on the ground, to speak up and make his excuses for taking beechnuts, a bur dropped from a twig and landed right in front of Grunty's nose. He fell upon it greedily. And, tearing it open, he devoured the nuts with relish.

For a few moments his action struck Jasper Jay dumb. That blue-coated rascal turned to Frisky Squirrel, who clung to a limb near-by.

"Well, did you ever?" Jasper gasped. And then, having found his voice, Jasper began to use it on Grunty Pig.

Now, Jasper Jay was a wild fellow. He often used words that made the gentler folk in Pleasant Valley shudder. And he called Grunty Pig names that would have made many a person angry. 99

Grunty Pig, however, never even blinked. And after a while Jasper Jay used up all his special words, which he generally employed at such times. He gave Frisky Squirrel a helpless look.

"My! My! Isn't this chap thick-skinned?" he exclaimed.

"Certainly I am!" cried Grunty Pig. "That's why I like to wallow in mud."

"Ha!" Jasper Jay sniffed. And he spoke again to Frisky Squirrel. "This chap is thick-headed, too. I see that I'm going to have trouble making him understand what I say."

Frisky Squirrel merely grinned at his companion.

"Look here, young Porker!" Jasper called to Grunty Pig. "Doesn't Farmer Green feed you?" 100

The name "Porker" made Grunty Pig look up.

"I'm Mrs. Pig's son," he said. "Don't call me 'Porker'!"

"Well—Pig, then!" Jasper Jay squalled. "Doesn't Farmer Green feed you?"

"Yes!"

"Well, then—don't come here and take our nuts! Didn't your mother ever teach you that things that grow on trees—such things as nuts—belong to the people that live in the trees?"

"Does Johnnie Green live in this tree?" Grunty Pig inquired.

"He spends half his time here—or a quarter, anyhow," Jasper Jay grumbled. "And you may be sure he gets his share of these beechnuts. Goodness knows he leaves few enough for me and my friend here. 101

"Now," Jasper Jay went on, "I want you to promise not to eat any more of our nuts."

Grunty Pig shook his head.

"I can't promise that, exactly," he said. "But I'll promise not to eat any that I don't find on the ground."

"Huh!" Jasper Jay scoffed. "That means that you won't eat any nuts that you can't reach. That's no promise at all. It's nothing but a threat. It's the same as saying that you're going to eat every nut that drops off this tree."

Grunty Pig made no reply. He would have wandered on, but for a fresh breeze that had begun to whip the branches of the beech tree. He decided to wait there. More burs might fall. And Grunty wanted to be on hand to meet them when they dropped. 102

"Go home!" Jasper Jay shrieked at him. "Go back to your pigpen where you belong. We don't want you here." And he said many more things that were still ruder.

But Grunty Pig never showed the least sign of anger. He didn't even let Jasper Jay know that he had heard. When the wind died down he waddled off down the road. And Frisky Squirrel followed him through the tree tops. When they had travelled out of Jasper Jay's sight and hearing, Frisky asked Grunty Pig a question.

"I should like to know," he said, "how you managed to keep still when Jasper was abusing you. I know that I should have lost my temper. Can it be that you didn't hear what he said?"

"Oh, I heard him clearly enough," said Grunty. "But there was no sense in my 103



getting angry with *him*. If he had been standing on the ground near me he would never have dared talk to me as he did. Jasper Jay called me names because he was safe in the tree. If he hadn't had that tree to help him he'd never have dared say what he did.

"To tell the truth, I am a bit out of patience with that beech tree," Grunty confessed. "It played me a mean trick. And I hope there'll be a raging wind tonight that will rob it of every bur it has.... I'd uproot the beech," he added, "if I didn't like beechnuts so much."

"Well, you *are* an odd one," said Frisky Squirrel.

"If everybody was as odd as I am there'd be fewer Jasper Jays in the world," Grunty Pig declared.

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## XXIII

104

### MOSES MOUSE'S WAY

One day when Grunty Pig was at home, in the pigpen, a squeaky voiced piped "Good morning!" to him. Looking up, Grunty saw a plump little gentleman clinging to the top board on one side of the pen.

"Good morning!" Grunty answered. "May I inquire what your name is?"

"I'm Moses Mouse," his caller replied.

"Do you live in the piggery?—or in the barn?" Grunty asked him.

"Neither!" said Moses Mouse. "I live in the farmhouse. My wife and I have a nest in the wall.... The cat's away," he explained. "That's why I decided to stroll across the yard and visit you folks out here."

105

"Some people," said Grunty Pig, "have all the luck. You live in the farmhouse. Miss Kitty Cat lives in the farmhouse—when she's at home. And old dog Spot spends a good deal of his time there—especially in cold weather. It must be pleasant to have your home where there's always plenty to eat, whenever you happen to feel hungry."

"Miss Kitty Cat and old dog Spot always fare well," Mr. Mouse admitted. "But I've often gone to bed half starved. Maybe you didn't know that Mrs. Green is terribly neat. She doesn't leave much food around for us Mice."

"Well," Grunty remarked, "it's an honor, anyhow, to live in the farmhouse. You ought not to complain about the food, even if it is a bit scarce at times. I'd be glad to live there. And I dare say I'd find a plenty to eat. The farmhouse is where the sour milk comes from."

106

"If you feel like that," said Moses Mouse, "why don't you join us? Why don't you come to the farmhouse for the winter, anyhow?"

Grunty Pig shook his head.

"No!" he said, half to himself. "No! I can't do it."

"Why not?" Mr. Mouse wanted to know.

"I've never been invited," Grunty told him, with something like a frown.

Moses Mouse surprised him with a merry laugh.

"Ho!" he exclaimed. "Neither have I. If I had waited for an invitation I wouldn't be living in the farmhouse. I'd have shivered my days out in the barn."

Grunty Pig looked at his caller with growing interest. He would have said that so tiny a gentleman would be too timid to crowd in where he wasn't asked.

107

"Don't wait any longer for an invitation," Moses Mouse urged him. "Go to the farmhouse and walk right in."

"Oughtn't I to rap?" Grunty inquired.

"Certainly not!" said Moses Mouse. "Make yourself right at home. Act as if the farmhouse belonged to you. That's the way I do. And nobody ever bothers me, except Miss Kitty Cat—or Miss Snooper, as we Mice call her. Even she can't drive me away from the farmhouse. I lived there before she ever came to Pleasant Valley."

"She certainly couldn't drive me away," Grunty Pig muttered. "Besides, didn't

you say she was away herself?"

"Yes!" said Moses Mouse. "And I hope she has gone for good."

108

"Then," said Grunty Pig, "it ought to be quite safe for me to go to the farmhouse. And as soon as I have a chance to get out of this pen I'll do as you suggest."

"Good!" cried Moses Mouse. And he said that he hoped to have many a chat with Grunty, at the farmhouse.

"Umph!" said Grunty Pig. And Mr. Mouse was much pleased, for he took that to mean "Yes!"

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## XXIV

109

### A PIG IN THE PARLOR

Grunty Pig had got out of his pen and out of the piggery, too. Ever since his talk with Moses Mouse the day before he had been hoping for a chance to escape. And shuffling across the farmyard somewhat heavily—for he was growing longer and taller and fatter every day—Grunty went straight to the woodshed door. It was open. And he walked through it. Then he clattered over the woodshed floor and peered into the kitchen. There was no one there.

For a few moments Grunty stood sniffing in the doorway. A delicious odor greeted him. He wasn't sure what it was. A pan sat near the edge of the table. And Grunty Pig had no trouble upsetting it with his nose.

110

Doughnuts rolled in every direction—crisp, brown, freshly fried doughnuts. And Grunty Pig showed that he was thoughtful. He went to the trouble of picking them all up off the floor. But he forgot to drop them back into the pan. Instead, he put every one of them into his own mouth.

"That Moses Mouse was all wrong," he murmured. "He complained of the food here. When I see him I'll have to tell him that he was mistaken. Why, I never ate anything that tasted better than these rings!"

After making sure that there was nothing else for him to devour in the kitchen Grunty Pig pushed through a door that stood ajar. He found himself in a long, dimly lighted hall. There were doors on both sides of it. Grunty nosed around each one in turn. Not till he came to the last of all, at the further end of the hall, did he find one that wasn't shut tight. This door yielded to a little gentle pushing. And Grunty then found himself—though he did not know it—in the parlor of the farmhouse.

111

As he stood still and gazed about him, who should come stealing into the room but Moses Mouse.

"Ah!" said Moses in a whisper. "So you've arrived at last?"

"Yes!" said Grunty Pig. "Isn't this a fine pen? Now that I've come to the farmhouse to live I believe I'll make this pen my headquarters."

"That's a good idea," Moses Mouse told him. "Farmer Green's family don't use it often. They seldom come here unless they have company."

112

While he listened, Grunty Pig sidled up to a table in the center of the room and began, in an absent-minded fashion, to rub his back against it. To his surprise, the table tipped over and a lamp that had stood upon it crashed into a hundred pieces on the floor. Then a door slammed somewhere. And steps sounded in the hall.

Moses Mouse tried not to look startled.

"I must be going now," he said abruptly. "I'll see you later." Then he dashed into the fireplace and ran up the chimney.

"The accident was really your fault," Grunty called to him. "If you hadn't talked so much I'd have noticed what I was doing."

Moses Mouse, however, did not reply. And a moment later Farmer Green's wife appeared in the doorway. When she saw Grunty Pig she gave a scream. Mrs. Green couldn't help being surprised at first. But soon she began to laugh as if she would never stop.

113

"A pig in our parlor!" she cried. "Who ever would have thought it?"

Grunty Pig tried to explain that the broken lamp was really Moses Mouse's

fault. But Mrs. Green wouldn't listen. She ran out of the room and came back at once with a broom in her hand. Then, opening the front door, she drove Grunty Pig into the yard.

"Now, I wonder why Mrs. Green put me out of the farmhouse," he muttered.

Suddenly an idea popped into his head. "It must be," he cried, "because I told tales. I tattled on Moses Mouse; and Mrs. Green didn't like it. Next time I'll be careful about what I say to her."

There never was a next time. Perhaps Farmer Green took pains to keep the door of Grunty's pen shut. Perhaps Farmer Green made the fence outside the piggery "hog tight," as he would say. Or perhaps Grunty Pig grew so fat that he couldn't squeeze through any ordinary opening.

Anyhow, Grunty never set foot inside the farmhouse again. After a while he didn't care. The bigger he was, the less he liked to roam about. And at last Farmer Green began calling him his "prize hog."

So you can see how very fat he must have been.

THE END

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