

Squinty, the Comical Pig

By Richard Barnum

Chapter 1: Squinty and the Dog

Squinty was a little pig. You could tell he was a pig just as soon as you looked at him, because he had the cutest little curly tail, as though it wanted to tie itself into a bow, but was not quite sure whether that was the right thing to do. And Squinty had a skin that was as pink, under his white, hairy bristles, as a baby's toes.

Also Squinty had the oddest nose! It was just like a rubber ball, flattened out, and when Squinty moved his nose up and down, or sideways, as he did when he smelled the nice sour milk the farmer was bringing for the pigs' dinner, why, when Squinty did that with his nose, it just made you want to laugh right out loud.

But the funniest part of Squinty was his eyes, or, rather, one eye. And that eye squinted just as well as any eye ever squinted. Somehow or other, I don't just know why exactly, or I would tell you, the lid of one of Squinty's eyes was heavier than the other. That eye opened only half way, and when Squinty looked up at you from the pen, where he lived with his mother and father and little brothers and sisters, why there was such a comical look on

Squinty's face that you wanted to laugh right out loud again.

In fact, lots of boys and girls, when they came to look at Squinty in his pen, could not help laughing when he peered up at them, with one eye widely open, and the other half shut.

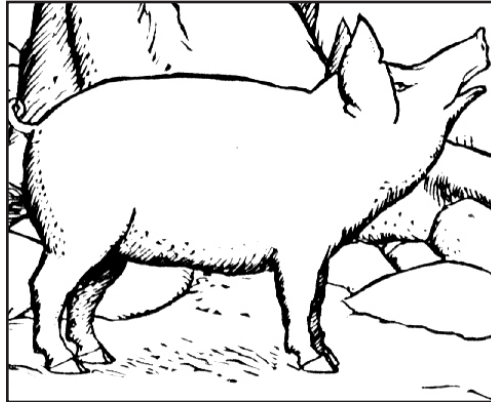
"Oh, what a comical pig!" the boys and girls would cry. "What is his name?"

"Oh, I guess we'll call him Squinty," the farmer said; and so Squinty was named.

Perhaps if his mother had had her way about it she would have given Squinty another name, as she did his brothers and sisters. In fact she did name all of them except Squinty.

One of the little pigs was named Wuff-Wuff, another Curly Tail, another Squealer, another Wee-Wee, and another Puff-Ball. There were seven pigs in all, and Squinty was the last one, so you see he came from quite a large family. When his mother had named six of her little pigs she came to Squinty.

"Let me see," grunted Mrs. Pig in her own way, for you know animals have a language of their own which no one else can understand.



"Let me see," said Mrs. Pig, "what shall I call you?"

She was thinking of naming him Floppy, because the lid of one of his eyes sort of flopped down. But just then a lot of boys and girls came running out to the pig pen.

The boys and girls had come on a visit to the farmer who owned the pigs, and when they looked in, and saw big Mr. and Mrs. Pig, and the little ones, one boy called out:

"Oh, what a queer little pig, with one eye partly open! And how funny he looks at you! What is his name?"

"Well, I guess we'll call him Squinty," the farmer had said. And so, just as I have told you, Squinty got his name.

"Humph! Squinty!" exclaimed Mrs. Pig, as she heard what the farmer said. "I don't know as I like that."

"Oh, it will do very well," answered Mr. Pig. "It will save you thinking up a name for him. And, after all, you know, he does squint. Not that it amounts to anything, in fact it is rather stylish, I think. Let him be called Squinty."

"All right," answered Mrs. Pig. So Squinty it was.

"Hello, Squinty!" called the boys and girls, giving the little pig his new name. "Hello, Squinty!"

"Wuff! Wuff!" grunted Squinty.

That meant, in his language, "Hello!" you see. For though Squinty, and his mother and father, and brothers and sisters, could understand man talk, and boy and girl talk,

they could not speak that language themselves, but had to talk in their own way.

Nearly all animals understand our talk, even though they can not speak to us. Just look at a dog, for instance. When you call to him: "Come here!" doesn't he come? Of course he does. And when you say: "Lie down, sir!" doesn't he lie down? That is if he is a good dog, and minds? He understands, anyhow.

And see how horses understand how to go when the driver says "Gid-dap!" and how they stop when he says "Whoa!" So you need not think it strange that a little pig could understand our kind of talk, though he could not speak it himself.

Well, Squinty, the comical pig, lived with his mother and father and brothers and sisters in the farmer's pen for some time. As the days went on Squinty grew fatter and fatter, until his pink skin, under his white bristles, was swelled out like a balloon.

"Hum!" exclaimed the farmer one day, as he leaned over the top of the pen, to look down on the pigs, after he had poured their dinner into the trough. "Hum! That little pig, with the squinty eye, is getting pretty big. I thought he was going to be a little runt, but he seems to be growing as fast as the others."

Squinty was glad when he heard that, for he wanted to grow up to be a fine, large pig.

The farmer took a corn cob, from which all the yellow kernels of corn had been shelled, and with it he scratched the back of Squinty. Pigs like to have their backs scratched, just as

cats like to have you rub their smooth fur, or tickle them under the ears.

“Ugh! Ugh!” grunted Squinty, looking up at the farmer with his comical eyes, one half shut and the other wide open. “Ugh! Ugh!” And with his odd eyes, and one ear cocked forward, and the other flopping over backward, Squinty looked so funny that the farmer had to laugh out loud.

“What’s the matter, Rufus?” asked the farmer’s wife, who was gathering the eggs.

“Oh, it’s this pig,” laughed the farmer. “He has such a queer look on his face!”

“Let me see!” exclaimed the farmer’s wife.

She, too, looked down into the pen.

“Oh, isn’t he comical!” she cried.

Then, being a very kind lady, and liking all the farm animals, the farmer’s wife went out in the potato patch and pulled up some pig weed.

This is a green weed that grows in the garden, but it does no good there. Instead it does harm, and farmers like to pull it up to get rid of it. But, if pig weed is no good for the garden, it is good for pigs, and they like to chew the green leaves.

“Here, Squinty!” called the farmer’s wife, tossing some of the juicy, green weed to the little pig. “Eat this!”

“Ugh! Ugh!” grunted Squinty, and he began to chew the green leaves. I suppose that was his way of saying: “Thank you!”

As soon as Squinty’s brothers and sisters saw the green pig weed the farmer’s wife had

tossed into the pen, up they rushed to the trough, grunting and squealing, to get some too.

They pushed and scrambled, and even stepped into the trough, so eager were they to get something to eat; even though they had been fed only a little while before.

That is one strange thing about pigs. They seem to be always hungry. And Squinty’s brothers and sisters were no different from other pigs.

But wait just a moment. They were a bit different, for they were much cleaner than many pigs I have seen. The farmer who owned them knew that pigs do not like to live in mud and dirt any more than do cows and horses, so this farmer had for his pigs a nice pen, with a dry board floor, and plenty of corn husks for their bed. They had clean water to drink, and a shady place in which to lie down and sleep.

Of course there was a mud bath in the pig pen, for, no matter how clean pigs are, once in a while they like to roll in the mud. And I’ll tell you the reason for that.

You see flies and mosquitoes and other pests like to bite pigs. The pigs know this, and they also know that if they roll in the mud, and get covered with it, the mud will make a coating over them to keep the biting flies away.

So that is why pigs like to roll in the mud once in awhile, just as you sometimes see a circus elephant scatter dust over his back, to drive away the flies. And even such a thick-

skinned animal as a rhinoceros likes to plaster himself with mud to keep away the insects.

But after Squinty and his brothers and sisters had rolled in the mud, they were always glad when the farmer came with the garden hose and washed them clean again, so their pink skins showed beneath their white, hairy bristles.

Squinty and the other pigs grew until they were a nice size. They had nothing to do but eat and sleep, and of course that will make anyone grow.

Now Squinty, though he was not the largest of the family of pig children, was by far the smartest. He learned more quickly than did his brothers and sisters, how to run to the trough to eat, when his mother called him, and he learned how to stand up against one side of the pen and rub himself back and forth to scratch his side when a mosquito had bitten him in a place he could not reach with his foot.

In fact Squinty was a little too smart. He wanted to do many things his brothers and sisters never thought of. One day when Squinty and the others had eaten their dinner, Squinty told his brother Wuff-Wuff that he thought it would be a nice thing to have some fun.

Wuff-Wuff said he thought so, too, but he didn't just know what to do. In fact there was not much one could do in a pig pen.

"If we could only get out of here!" grunted Squinty, as he looked out through a crack in the boards and saw the green garden, where pig weed was growing thickly.

"Yes, but we can't," said Wuff-Wuff.

Squinty was not so sure about this. In fact he was a very inquisitive little pig—that is, he always wanted to find out about things, and why this and that was so, and what made the wheels go around, and all like that.

"I think I can get out through that place," said Squinty to himself, a little later. He had found another crack between two boards of the pen—a large crack, and one edge of the board was loose. Squinty began to push with his rubbery nose.

A pig's nose is pretty strong, you know, for it is made for digging, or rooting in the earth, to turn up acorns, and other good things to eat.

Squinty pushed and pushed on the board until he had made it very loose. The crack was getting wider.

"Oh, I can surely get out!" he thought. He looked around; his mother and father and all the little pigs were asleep in the shady part of the pen.

"I'm going!" said Squinty to himself.

He gave one extra hard push, and there he was through the big crack, and outside the pen. It was the first time he had ever been out in his life. At first he was a little frightened, but when he looked over into the potato patch, and saw pig weed growing there he was happy.

"Oh, what a good meal I shall have!" grunted Squinty.

He ran toward a large bunch of the juicy, green pig weed, but before he reached it he heard a dreadful noise.

“Bow wow! Bow wow! Bow wow!” went some animal, and then came some growls, and the next moment Squinty saw, rushing toward him Don, the big black and white dog of the farmer. “Bow wow! Bow wow! Bow wow!” barked Don, and that meant, in his language: “Get back in your pen, Squinty! What do you mean by coming out? Get back! Bow wow!”

“Oh dear! Oh dear!” squealed Squinty. “I shall be bitten sure! That dog will bite me! Oh dear! Why didn’t I stay in the pen?”

Squinty turned on his little short legs, as quickly as he could, and started back for the pen. But it was not easy to run in a potato field, and Squinty, not having lived in the woods and fields as do some pigs, was not a very good runner.

“Bow wow! Bow wow!” barked Don, running after Squinty.

I do not believe Don really meant to hurt the comical little pig. In fact I know he did not, for Don was very kind-hearted. But Don knew that the pigs were supposed to stay in their pen, and not come out to root up the garden. So Don barked:

“Bow wow! Bow wow! Get back where you belong, Squinty.”

Squinty ran as fast as he could, but Don ran faster. Squinty caught his foot in a melon vine, and down he went. Before he could get up Don was close to him, and, the next moment Squinty felt his ear being taken between Don’s strong, white teeth.

“Oh dear! Oh dear! Oh dear!” squealed Squinty, in his own queer, pig language. “What is going to happen to me?”