

Squinty, the Comical Pig

By Richard Barnum

Chapter 2: Squinty Runs Away

Between the barking of Don, the dog, and the squealing of Squinty, the comical pig, who was being led along by his ear, there was so much noise in the farmer's potato patch, for a few moments, that, if you had been there, I think you would have wondered what was happening.

"Bow wow! Bow wow! Bow wow!" barked Don, still keeping hold of Squinty's ear, though he did not pinch very hard. "Bow wow! Get back to your pen where you belong!"

"Squee! Squee! Squee!" yelled Squinty. "Oh, please let me go! I'll be good!"

And so it went on, the dog talking in his barking language, and Squinty squealing in his pig talk; but they could easily understand one another, even if no one else could.

Back in the pen Mrs. Pig suddenly awakened from a nap. So did Mr. Pig, and all the little pigs.

"Don't you hear something making a noise?" asked Mrs. Pig of her husband.

"Why, yes, I think I do," he answered slowly, as he looked in the feed trough, to see if the farmer had left any more sour milk there for the pig family to eat. But there was none.

"I hear someone squealing," said Wuff-Wuff, the largest boy pig of them all.

"So do I," said Squeaker, a little girl pig.

Mrs. Pig sat up, and looked all over the pen. She was counting her children to see if they were all there. She did not see Squinty, and at once she became frightened.

"Squinty is gone!" cried Mrs. Pig. "Oh, where can he be?"

The squealing noise became louder. So did the barking of the dog.

"Look, there is a board off the side of the pen," said Mr. Pig.

"Yes, Squinty wanted me to come outside with him," said Wuff-Wuff. "But I wouldn't go."

"Oh, maybe my little boy pig is outside there, making all that noise!" cried Mrs. Pig to her husband.

"Well, he isn't making all that noise by himself," said the father pig. "Someone is helping him make it, I'm sure."

They all listened, and heard the barking of Don, as well as the squealing of Squinty.

"Oh, some animal has caught him!" cried Mrs. Pig. Then she pushed as hard as she could with her nose, against the loose board near the hole in the pen, through which Squinty had run a little while before. Mrs. Pig soon knocked off the board, and then she ran out into the garden, Mr. Pig and all the little pigs ran after her.

The first thing Mrs. Pig saw was her little boy pig down on the ground in the middle

of a row of melon vines, with Don holding Squinty's ear.

"Bow wow!" barked Don.

"Squee! Squee!" cried Squinty.

"Oh, you poor little pig!" grunted Mrs. Pig. "What has happened to you?"

"Oh, mamma!" squealed Squinty. "I—I ran out of the pen to see what it was like outside, and I was just eating some pig weed, when this big dog chased after me."

"Yes, I did," said Don, growling in his deep voice. "The place for pigs, little or big, is in their pen. The farmer does not want you to come out and spoil his garden. He tells me to watch you, and to drive you back if you come in it."

"This is the first time I have seen any of you pigs in the garden," went on Don, still keeping hold of Squinty's ear, "and I want you, please, to go back in your pen."

"Oh, I'll go! I'll go!" cried Squinty. "Only let loose of my ear, Mr. Dog, if you please!"

"What! Have you hold of Squinty's ear?" asked Wuff-Wuff. "Oh, do please let him go!"

"Yes, I will, now that you are here," said Don, and he took his strong, white teeth from the piggy boy's ear. "I did not bite him hard enough to hurt him," said Don. "But I had to catch hold of him somewhere, and taking him by the ear was better than taking him by the tail, I think."

"Oh, yes, indeed!" agreed Mr. Pig. "Once, when I was a little pig, a dog bit me on the tail, and I never got over it. In fact I have the marks yet," and he tried to look around at his tail,

which had a kink in it. But Mr. Pig was too fat to see his own tail.

"So that's why I took hold of Squinty by the ear," went on Don. "Did I hurt you very much?" he asked the little pig who had run out of the pen.

"Oh, no; not much," Squinty said, as he rubbed his ear with his paw. Then, as he saw a bunch of pig weed close to him, he began nibbling that. And his brothers and sisters, seeing him do this, began to eat the pig weed also.

"Come! This will never do!" barked Don, the dog. "I am sorry, but all you pigs must go back in your own pen. The farmer would not like you to be out in his garden."

"Yes, I suppose we must," said Mrs. Pig, with a sigh. "Yet it is very nice out in the garden. But we must stay in our pen."

"Come, children," said Mr. Pig. "We must stay in our own place, for if we rooted up the farmer's garden, much as we would like to do it, he would have no vegetables to eat this winter. Then he might be angry at us, and would give us no more sour milk. So we will go back to our pen."

"Bow wow! Bow wow!" barked Don, running here and there. "I will show you the way back to your pen," he said, kindly.

And he capered about, here and there, driving the pigs back to the place where Squinty had run from, and where all the others had come from, to see what had happened to him.

The farmer, who was hoeing corn, heard the barking of his dog. He dropped the hoe and ran.

"Something must have happened!" he cried. "Maybe the big bull has gotten loose from his field, and is chasing someone with a red dress."

Into the garden he ran, and then he saw Don driving Squinty, and his brothers and sisters, and mother and father, back to the pen.

"Ha! So the pigs got loose!" the farmer cried. "Good dog! Chase 'em back!"

"Bow wow!" barked Don. "I will!"

But the pigs did not need much driving, for they were very good, and did not want to cause Don, or the farmer, any trouble if they could help it.

Soon Squinty and the others were safely in the pen again. The farmer looked at them carefully.

"So, you thought you'd like to get out and have a run, did you?" he asked, speaking to pigs just as if they could understand him. And they did, just as your dog understands, and minds you when you call to him to come to you.

"So you wanted a run in the garden, eh?" went on the farmer. "Well, I don't blame you, for it isn't much fun to stay cooped up in a pen all the while. But still I can't have you out. But I'll give you a nice lot of pig weed, just the same, for you must be hungry."

Then the farmer pulled up some more of the green stuff, and tossed it into the pen. He also gave them plenty of sour milk, which pigs like better than sweet milk. Besides, it is cheaper.

"Well, I guess you won't run away again," the farmer went on, as he nailed back on the pen the board which Squinty had pushed off.

Perhaps the farmer thought one of the big pigs—the papa or mamma one—had made the hole for the others to get out. I am sure he never thought little Squinty, with his comical eye, did it. But we know Squinty did, don't we?

For some time after this Squinty was a very-good pig, indeed. Not that I mean to say he was bad when he ran out of the pen, for he did not know any better. But, after the board was nailed on tightly again, he did not try to push it off. Perhaps he knew he could not do it.

Squinty and his brothers and sisters had lots of fun in the pen, even if they could not go out. They played games in the straw, hiding away from one another, and squealing and grunting when they were found. They raced around the pen, playing a game much like our game of tag, and if they could have had someone to tie a hand-kerchief over their eyes, they might have played blind-man's bluff. But of course they did not really do this.

However, they raced about, and jumped over each other's backs, and climbed upon the fat sides of their father and mother while the big pigs lay asleep in the shade.

Squinty was a pig very fond of playing tricks. Sometimes he would take a choice, tender piece of pig weed, which the farmer had tossed into the pen, and hide it in the soft dirt in one corner.

"Now see who can find it!" Squinty would call to his brothers and sisters, and they would hunt all over for it, rooting up the earth with their strong, rubbery noses.

Digging in the dirt was good practice for them, and their mother and father would watch them, saying:

“Ah, when they grow up they will be very good rooting pigs indeed. Yes, very good!”

Then Squinty, or his brothers or sisters, would root up the hidden pig weed, and the old pigs would go to sleep again, for they did not need to practice digging, having done so when they were young. About all they did was to eat and sleep, and tell the little pigs how to behave.

“Squinty, how is your ear that Don, the dog, bit?” asked Mrs. Pig of her little boy pig one day.

“Oh, it doesn’t hurt me,” answered Squinty. “Don did not bite very hard. He only wanted to catch me.”

“Yes, Don is a good dog,” said Mrs. Pig. “But you must be careful of other dogs, Squinty.”

“Why, are not all dogs alike?” the little pig boy asked.

“Oh, no, indeed!” answered Mrs. Pig. “Some of them are very bad and savage. They would bite you very hard if they got the chance. So, whenever you see any dog, except Don, running toward you, run away as fast as you can.”

“I will,” promised Squinty. And he did not know how soon he would be glad to remember his mother’s good advice.

For some days nothing much happened in the pig pen. Once or twice Squinty pushed his nose against the board the farmer had nailed on, but it was very tight, he found, and he could not push it off.

“Are you trying to get out again?” asked Wuff-Wuff.

“Oh, I don’t know,” Squinty would answer. “I think it would be fun if we all could; don’t you?”

“No, indeed!” cried Wuff-Wuff. “Some big dog might chase us. I want to stay in the pen.”

But Squinty was a brave, bold, mischievous little pig. He was not content to stay in the pen. He wanted to have some adventures. He wanted to get out in the garden, which looked so nice and green.

Squinty looked all around the other sides of the pen. He wanted to see if there was another loose board. If there was, he made up his little pig mind that he would go out again. But he said nothing of this to his brothers or sisters, or to his father or mother. He felt that they would not like him to go away again.

“But there is not much fun staying in the pen all the while,” thought Squinty. “I wish I could get out.”

Squinty, you see, had made up his mind to run away. Often horses run away, so I don’t see why pigs can’t, also. Anyhow, that was what Squinty intended to do.

But, for nearly a week after his first adventure in the garden, Squinty had no chance to slip out of the pen. All the boards seemed very tight.

Then, one day, it was very hot. The sun shone brightly.

“Dig holes for yourselves in the cool ground, and lie down in them,” said Mrs. Pig. “That will cool you off.”

Each little pig dug a hole for himself, just as a hen does when she wants to take a dust bath. Squinty dug his hole near the lower edge of the boards, on one side of the pen.

“I’ll make a big hole,” he thought to himself.

And, as Squinty dug down, he noticed that he could see under the bottom of the boards. He could look right out into the garden.

“That is very queer,” thought the little pig boy. “I believe I can get out of the pen by crawling under a board, as well as by pushing one loose from the side. I’ll try it.” Squinty was learning things, you see.

So he dug the hole deeper and deeper, and soon it was large enough for him to slip under the bottom board.

“Now I can run away,” he grunted softly to himself. He looked all around the pen. His father, mother, sisters and brothers were fast asleep in their cool holes of earth.

“I’m going!” said Squinty, and the next moment he had slipped under the side of the pen, through the hole he had dug, and once more he was out in the garden.

“Now for some adventures!” said Squinty, in a jolly whisper—a pig’s whisper, you know.