

Squinty, the Comical Pig

By Richard Barnum

Chapter 4: Squinty Gets Home

The rows of corn, in the field where Squinty the comical pig was lost, were like the streets of a city. They were very straight and even, just like the street where your house is, and, if you liked, you could pretend that each hill of corn was a house.

Perhaps Squinty pretended this, if pigs ever do pretend. At any rate the little lost pig wandered up and down in the rows of corn, peering this way and that, to see which way to go so he could get home again. He began to think that running away was not so much fun as he had at first thought.

“Oh dear!” Squinty grunted, in his funny, squealing voice. “I wonder if I’ll ever see my mamma and papa again?”

Squinty ran this way and that up and down the rows of corn, and you can easily imagine what happened. He soon became very tired. “I think I will take a rest,” thought Squinty, talking to himself, because there was no one else to whom he could speak. I think the little pig would have been very glad, just then, to speak even to Don, the dog. But Don was not there.

Squinty, wondering what happened to little pigs when they were lost, and if they ever got home again, stretched out on the dirt between two rows of corn. It was shady there, but over-head the hot sun was shining.

Squinty’s breath came very fast, just as when a dog runs far on a warm day.

But the earth was rather cool, and Squinty liked it. He would much rather have been down by the cool brook, but he knew he could not have a swim in it until he found it. And, just now, he seemed a good way off from it.

Poor Squinty! It was bad enough to be tired and warm, but to be lost was worse, and to be hungry was worse than all—especially to a little pig. And, more than this, there was nothing to eat.

Squinty had tried to nibble at some of the green corn stalks, but he did not like the taste of them. Perhaps he had not yet learned to like them, for I have seen older pigs eat corn stalks. And pigs are very fond of the yellow corn itself. They love to gnaw it off the cob, and chew it, just as you chew popcorn.

But the corn was not yet ripe, and Squinty was too little to have eaten it, if it had been ripe. Later on he would learn to do this. Just now he cared more about finding his way home, and also finding something that he could eat.

For some time the little lost pig rested on the cool earth, in the shade of the rows of corn. Then he got up with a grunt and a squeal, and began rooting in the ground.

“Perhaps I may find some potatoes, or some pig weed, here,” thought Squinty. “Who knows?”

But all he could root up, with his queer, rubbery nose, was some round stones. Some of these were brown, and looked so much like the little potatoes, that Squinty tried to chew one. But when he felt the hard stone on his little white teeth he cried out in pain.

“Ouch!” squealed Squinty. “That hurt! Those are funny potatoes! I never knew they could be so hard.”

Later on he learned that what he supposed were potatoes were only stones. You see it takes a little pig some time to learn all the things he needs to know.

Squinty let the stone roll out of his mouth, and he looked at it with such an odd look on his face, peering at it with his squinty eye, and with one ear cocked up sort of sideways, that, if you had seen him, you could not have helped laughing. No one could, if they had seen Squinty then, but there was no one in the field to watch him.

“Well,” thought Squinty, after a bit, “this will never do. I can’t stay here. I must try to find my way back home. Let me see; what had I better do? I guess the first thing is to find that field of real potatoes, and not the make-believe ones like this,” and he pushed the stone away with his nose.

“When I find the potato field,” he went on, still talking to himself, “I am sure I can find the brook where I had a swim. And when I find the brook I will know my way home, for there is a straight path from there to our pen.”

So Squinty started off once more to walk through the rows of corn. As he walked along on his little short legs he grunted, and rooted in the earth with his nose. Sometimes he stumbled over a big stone, or a clod of dirt, and fell down.

“Oh dear!” exclaimed poor Squinty, when he got up after falling down about six times, “Oh dear! This is no fun. I wish I had stayed in the pen with my brothers and sisters. I wonder what they are doing now?”

Just then Squinty felt more hungry than ever, and he thought it must be feeding-time back in the pen.

“Oh, they must be having some nice sour milk just now!” thought Squinty. “How I wish I were back with them!”

And then, as he fancied he could smell the nice sour milk, which the farmer or his wife was pouring into the eating trough of the pen, Squinty just howled and squealed with hunger. Oh, what a noise he made!

Then this gave him an idea.

“Ha!” he exclaimed to himself, in a way pigs have, “why didn’t I think of that before? I must squeal for help. My mamma, or papa, may hear me and come for me.”

Then Squinty happened to think that the hole, by which he had gotten out of the pen, was not large enough for his fat papa or mamma to crawl through.

“No, they can’t get out to come for me,” Squinty thought. “They’ll have to send Wuff-Wuff, or Squealer. And maybe they’ll get lost, the same as I did. Oh dear, I guess I won’t

squeal any more. It's bad enough for me to be lost, without any of my brothers or sisters getting lost, too."

So Squinty stopped squealing, and walked on and on between the rows of corn, trying to find his way home to the pen all by himself. Squinty was really quite a brave pig, wasn't he?

By this time, as you can well believe, Mr. and Mrs. Pig, in the pen, had awakened from their afternoon sleep. And all the little pigs had awakened too, for they were beginning to feel hungry again.

"Isn't it about time the farmer came with some sour milk for us?" asked Mr. Pig of Mrs. Pig.

"I think it is," she said, looking up at the sun, for the sun is the only clock that pigs, and other animals, have. When they see the sun in the east, low down, they know it is morning. When it shines directly over their heads, high in the sky, they know it is noon. And when the sun sinks down in the west the pigs know it is getting toward night, and supper time.

The sun was low down in the west now, and Mr. and Mrs. Pig knew it must be nearly time for their evening meal.

"Come, Wuff-Wuff. Come, Squealer. Come, Squinty, and all the rest of you!" called Mrs. Pig in her grunting voice. "Come, get ready for supper. I think I hear the farmer coming with the nice sour milk!"

"Squee! Squee! Squee!" squealed all the little pigs, for they were very hungry indeed. "Squee! Squee! Squee!"

They all made a rush to see who would get to the eating trough first. Some of them even put their feet in, they were so anxious. Pigs are always that way. They know no better, so we must excuse them. If they had been taught not to do that, and then did it, we would not excuse them.

"Here comes the farmer with the sour milk," grunted Mr. Pig. "Oh, how good it smells!"

Just then Squealer cried:

"Why, where's Squinty?"

His brothers and sisters looked around.

Squinty, the comical pig, was not to be seen. But we know where he was, even if his mamma and papa and brothers and sisters did not. Squinty was in the cornfield, trying to find his way back to the pen.

"Why, where can Squinty be?" asked Mrs. Pig. "Squinty! Squinty!" she called, grunting and squealing as she always did. "Come to the trough!" she went on. "Supper is ready!"

But Squinty did not come. The farmer poured the sour milk down the slide, where it ran into the trough, and the little pigs began to eat. But Mr. and Mrs. Pig began looking for Squinty. They turned up the straw, thinking he might be asleep under it. No Squinty was to be seen. Then Mr. Pig saw the hole under the side boards of the pen.

"Ha!" exclaimed Mr. Pig, speaking to Mrs. Pig, "I think perhaps Squinty went out there."

"Oh, so he did!" said Mrs. Pig. "What shall we do?"

Just then the farmer looked over in the pen to see how fat the pigs were getting. He counted the little pigs. Then a queer look came over his face.

“Hello!” he exclaimed. “Only six here! One of those pigs has gotten out. I must look into this!”

Quickly he glanced all about the pen. He saw the hole out of which Squinty had run away.

“I thought so!” exclaimed the farmer. “One of the pigs has rooted his way out. I’ll have to go after him. Here, Don!” he called to his dog. “A pig is loose! We must catch him!” and he whistled for the big black and white dog, who ran up, barking and leaping about.

At first Squinty’s brothers and sisters were paying so much attention to drinking their sour milk, that they did not notice what the farmer said, even though they missed Squinty at the trough. But when they heard the dog barking, they wondered what had happened. Then they saw their mamma and papa looking anxious, and talking together in their grunting language, and Wuff-Wuff asked:

“Has anything happened?”

“Squinty is lost!” said Mrs. Pig, rubbing her nose up against that of Curly Tail, the littlest girl pig of them all. “He must have run out of the pen when we were asleep.”

“Oh dear!” cried all the little pigs, and they felt very badly.

“Never mind,” said Mr. Pig, “I heard the farmer call Don, the dog, to go off and find Squinty. I think he’ll bring him back.”

“Oh, but maybe Don will bite Squinty,” said Wuff-Wuff.

“I guess not,” answered Mr. Pig. “Don is a gentle dog. But, anyhow, we want Squinty back, and the only way we can get him is to have the farmer and his dog go after him.”

The other little pigs finished their supper of sour milk, with some small potatoes which the farmer’s wife threw in to them. Mr. and Mrs. Pig ate a little, and then the farmer, after stopping up the hole where Squinty got out, so no more of the pigs could run away, started off over the fields, calling to his dog.

“Bow wow! Bow wow! Bow wow!” barked Don. That meant, in dog language, “I’ll find Squinty and bring him back.”

Meanwhile Squinty had tried his best to find a way out of the cornfield. But all he did was to walk up one row, and down another. If he had been tall enough to stand up and look over the tops of the corn stalks, he might have seen which way to go, but he was not yet large enough for that.

Pretty soon Squinty looked up, and he saw that the sun was not as bright as it had been. Squinty knew what this meant. The sun was going down, and it would soon be night.

“Oh dear! I wonder if I shall have to stay out all alone in the dark night,” thought poor Squinty. “Oh, I’ll never run away again; never!”

Just then he heard, off through the rows of corn, a dog barking.

“Bow wow! Bow wow! Bow wow!” went the dog.

“Oh, what shall I do? Where shall I hide?” thought Squinty. “A bad dog is after me.”

He ran this way and that, stumbling and falling down. The barking of the dog sounded nearer. Then Squinty heard a man’s voice saying:

“Get after him, Don! Find him! Find that pig!”

“Bow wow!” was the barking answer.

“Ha!” thought Squinty. “Don! That’s the name of the good dog on our farm! I wonder if he is coming after me?”

Just then the farmer, who had been following the tracks left in the soft ground by Squinty’s feet, came to the cornfield. The farmer saw where the pig had been walking between the green rows of corn.

“He’s here, somewhere, Don,” the farmer said. “Find him!”

“Bow wow!” barked Don. “I will!”

Just then Squinty stumbled over a big stone, and he could not help grunting. He also gave a little squeal.

“Here he is, Don!” called the farmer. “Take him by the ear, and lead him back to the pen. Easy, now!”

Squinty stood still. He did not want to run away from Don. Squinty was only too anxious to be found, and taken home.

The next minute, through the rows of corn, came bounding Don, the dog. He was followed by the farmer.

“Ah, there he is! The little runaway!” cried the farmer man as he saw the pig. “After him, Don! But don’t hurt him!”

Don raced up beside Squinty, and took him gently by the ear.

“Bow wow!” barked the dog, and that meant: “Come along with me, if you please. You have been away from your pen quite long enough.”

Squinty gave a loud squeal when Don took him by the ear, but when the little pig found that the dog did not mean to hurt him, he grew quiet, and went along willingly enough.

“I must make that pig pen a great deal tighter, if they are going to get out and run away every day,” said the farmer to himself, as he walked along behind Don and Squinty.

Soon they were at the pig pen, and Oh! how glad Squinty was to see it again. The farmer picked the little pink fellow, now all tired out and covered with dirt, up in his arms and dropped him down inside the pen with the other pigs.

“There!” cried the farmer. “I guess you’ll stay in after this.”

“Bow wow!” barked Don, jumping about, for he thought it was fun to chase runaway pigs.

And so Squinty got safely back home. But very soon he was to have some more adventures.