

PORKY PINE



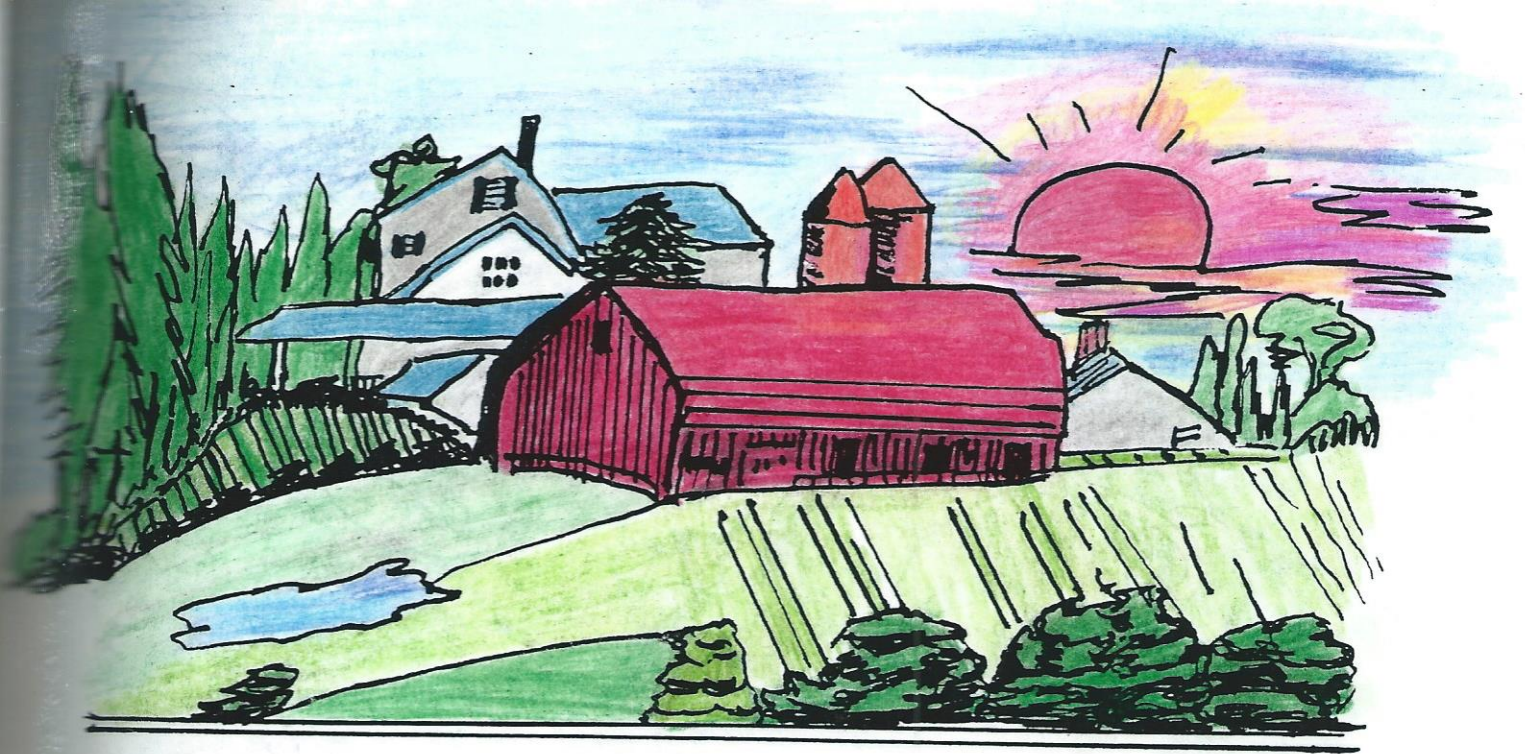
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The sun rose in the sky and shone brightly on a little farm in a beautiful valley by the edge of a great forest. The rooster crowed and all the animals on the farm began to stir.

The big sow, Maggie, and her seven little piglets were just coming from the huge barn into the warm sunlight. Six of the piglets stayed close beside their mother. The seventh little piglet, whose name was Porky, being of an adventurous spirit, was exploring the barnyard along the fence. Now and then he would poke his head through the wire and taste a few weeds growing on the other side. He had just discovered a small hole in the wire fencing. Wiggle, wiggle, push, push, Pop! He was outside of the fence.

There was so much to explore that soon Porky had wandered to the edge of the forest. Even then he did not notice that the trees were becoming thicker and larger. He



was too busy exploring the wonderful world outside the pen. There were flowers and butterflies and wonderful smells and sounds all around him. Beautifully colored birds flew from tree to tree and filled the air with happy chirping sounds. Porky could hear the water splashing from a near-by brook. He wandered farther and farther into the woods.

It was not until he began to grow hungry that Porky noticed that the rest of his family was not with him. He was all alone. It was beginning to get dark. The forest had become very quiet. Porky was frightened.



Suddenly a twig snapped. Porky squealed and darted under the root of a large tree. When he peeked out he saw a strange creature with long floppy ears and a nose that wiggled constantly. The creature blinked its big brown eyes and came cautiously

toward Porky. It hopped up and down as it came.

Animals of the deep forest can tell when another animal is frightened. The rabbit knew that Porky was frightened and that he was very young. "Who are you, and where did you come from?" asked the rabbit. "You are not a forest animal."

Porky was almost too frightened to speak, but he managed to tell the rabbit his name and that he was from the farm in the valley.

"I see," said the rabbit who had become very brave once he realized that Porky would not hurt him. "It will soon be night. The forest is not a safe place for a baby farm animal. Come with me. You must stay in my den until morning. You will be safe there. In fact, you are already there. Just back up a little."

Porky did as the rabbit said and found himself in a snug tunnel. "Keep going,



quickly now!" whispered the rabbit. Porky backed up a little faster. After just a few more steps the tunnel became much wider. "Here we are" said the rabbit.

"Where are we?" cried Porky. "It's dark! I can't see. I'm very hungry. I want my mother!"

"I'm sorry," said the rabbit. "We can't do anything about that until morning. We are in my den, and if you don't want to be the fox's dinner you will stay here and go to sleep."

Porky cried softly and shivered a lot before he finally fell asleep. It made him feel a little better to have the rabbit's warm and furry body cuddled beside him.

In the morning Porky woke up with a squeel when the rabbit gave him a gentle kick. The rabbit led Porky through the tunnel and out under the roots of the big tree. As they came out from among the safety of the great tree Porky saw another animal and turned to run. "This is Britter," said the rabbit. "He won't hurt you. Britter is a racoon. Racoons are very clever. I told him all about you. Britter, meet Porky!" laughed the rabbit, hopping straight up in the air and coming down beside Britter.

Britter came slowly toward Porky and sniffed him all around. "Hmm...Porky's your name. That gives me an idea," laughed Britter, becoming very excited. "Yes! Yes! I have a wonderful idea, Porky, and it may just keep you safe from the fox until we can get you back to your mother."

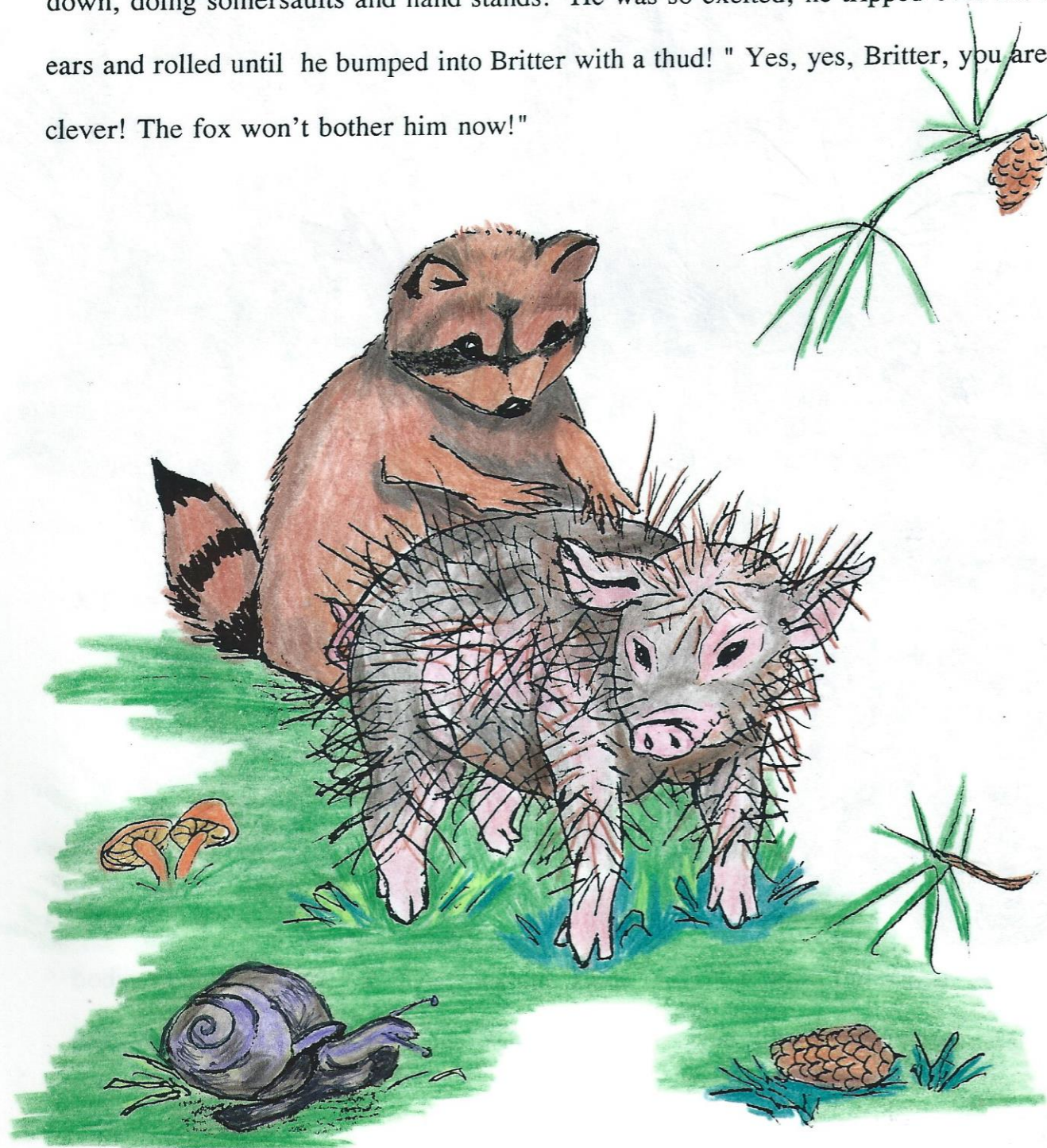
"I told you he was clever," said the rabbit, hopping excitedly in big circles around Porky.

"Stop or you'll make him dizzy," Britter warned. "Come with me little fellow. See that sap running from the place on the pine tree where the bark has been stripped? Porky, you go and roll in the sticky sap. Get it all over your body, ears and face too. That's it, roll some more. A little more over here. Good! Good!"



Britter led Porky by the ear. "Now roll all around in these long pine needles. A little more! Good! Now just a little touch," laughed Britter, brushing the long pine needles with his little hands until they stood up and stuck out all over Porky's body.

Now Rabbit became very excited. "I see, I see!" he whispered, and jumped up and down, doing somersaults and hand stands. He was so excited, he tripped over his own ears and rolled until he bumped into Britter with a thud! "Yes, yes, Britter, you are so clever! The fox won't bother him now!"



"Taa Daa!" sang Britter, feeling very smart. "Now, Porky, you are a porcky-pine!"

Rabbit and Britter laughed and laughed, rolling on the ground.

Porky did not laugh. "I am a what?" he asked, feeling very silly and very, very sticky.



"No time to explain," chattered Britter. " Must get you to the edge of the forest. Rabbit, you go with Porky. You are very fast. If Fox or Coyote comes, they won't be too anxious to get close enough to Porky to get a good sniff. You must lead them away! They will chase you."

"Oh, I can, I can," squeaked rabbit. "They'll never catch me!"

"Well be careful that they don't!" Britter grunted. "Porky, you follow Rabbit. If there is danger, do just as he says. Good luck little friend! And, Rabbit, you be careful and use those big ears of yours!"

Rabbit and Porky went through the forest together. Rabbit led the way. Sometimes he went so fast, Porky could hardly keep up. Sometimes he went very slowly. Often he stopped to listen. Once Rabbit stopped to eat a little grass. Porky tried some, but he did not like it. He was so hungry. He missed his mother.

Once in a while Rabbit would look at Porky and giggle. "Come on little porky-pine," he would laugh. Porky did not know why rabbit was laughing. He did not see anything very funny.

They never did meet Fox or Coyote and after a long time they were at the edge of the meadow. Porky could see the farm not far away. He was so happy, he began to squeal. "Thank you, Rabbit, thank you!"

"Now run as fast as you can, little porky-pine-pig!" laughed Rabbit. "But before you get to your pen, you must roll in the grass until you lose all your quills."

" All my what?" asked Porky, in a happy excited little pig voice.

"Just do it, and Goodbye, my little piglet friend," said rabbit, hopping quickly back to the forest.



Porky did just as Rabbit told him. He rolled in the grass until he did not feel sticky. Then he squeezed under the fence and ran to join his family. His brothers and sisters did not know he had been gone at all, but his mother was glad to see him.