



When a Pig Flew

Templeton Moss

Animals, Humor, Magic

When people say “When pigs fly” what they really mean is “never” because, as we all know, pigs cannot fly. But the next time someone tells you something will only happen “when pigs fly,” you might want to inform them that this has already happened, and tell them this story:

Tracey was a pig. And like many other pigs, she had her hopes and dreams and ambitions. Her greatest dream was to fly. All her life she had watched the birds flying overhead and wondered what it must be like. She even tried flying herself. She climbed up onto a bale of hay and jumped, but that didn’t work. She tried running and jumping into the wind, but that didn’t work.

Once she even persuaded a flock of geese to try lifting her up off the ground....that one didn’t really go well for anyone involved.

She was just about ready to give up, which would have made this story very short but easy to tell, when an old sheep who knew about stuff said, “If you want to fly, why not visit the Spirit of the Woods?”

“Woods? What woods?”

“Oh, you know, the thousand acre forest of dense trees just outside the farm. Over there, see?”

Tracey looked and, indeed, there was an enormous forest just outside the farm. Funny how she’d never noticed it before. Anyway, she went into the forest and soon met the Spirit of the Woods who was, in actual fact, a monkey.

“Why do you seek the Spirit of the Woods?”

“Spirit?” said Tracey. “But you’re a monkey.”

“I’m a monkey spirit.”

“Oh, I see. Well, Mr. Spirit, I’m here because I want to fly!”

“Fly?” said the Spirit. “Well, that is a rare gift.”

“Gift?”

“Yes. Every animal, when it is born, is given a few gifts. Some are given great speed or agility. Some are given keen senses. Some are given long, prehensile nasal appendages which can be used for picking up grass or sucking up water or...anyway, no two animals get the same gifts, but I think it’s pretty even.”

“Even? Are you kidding? Birds get to fly all over the world and feel the wind in their face. All I ever do is dig in the dirt, roll around in the mud, sniff out the occasional truffle. That’s not even. That’s not fair!”

“Very well,” said the Spirit. “I can help you, but there will be a price. Every time you fly you will lose one of your original gifts.” As far as Tracey could tell, she hadn’t been given any decent gifts, so she agreed. “I’d suggest you wait until after dark to fly. In case the humans get suspicious.”

Thanking the Spirit, Tracey walked home and waited impatiently for nightfall. Then she took off! It was the most wonderful experience of her life! She was soaring through the sky, doing loop-the-loops in the air, swooping down on very confused field mice. But as she flew, she felt an odd tingling sensation around her backside. When she landed, she turned around and saw that her tail, once curly as a corkscrew, was now straight.

“This must be what the Spirit meant by losing my gifts,” thought Tracey. “Oh well. So my tail’s not curly anymore. Who cares? As long as I can fly!”

The next night, she flew again and this time the odd sensation was in her feet. She landed (with some difficulty) to find that she no longer had the little hooves (or “trotters” as they are sometimes called) that she was used to. Her feet were now small and flat, sort of like paws. Again, she thought nothing of this...until she found how difficult it was for her to walk on feet she wasn’t used to. Not only that, but she couldn’t dig the way

she used to.

This went on for several days. The next time she flew, she lost her big, flat nose and could no longer smell the way she used to, which meant no more hunting for truffles. The next time she flew, her soft, pink skin was replaced with thick, coarse fur, which made it very uncomfortable to roll around in the mud. Poor Tracey was miserable. Sure, she could fly, but she wasn't even a pig anymore. She didn't know what she was!

Neither, as it turned out, did the humans whose farm she lived on. They thought she was some kind of wild beast who had come in from the forest and they chased her away. She ran back into the woods to find the Spirit and beg him to change her back. It was after dark by the time she finally found the Spirit again, who was actually playing cards with another monkey.

"Mr. Spirit!" cried Tracey. "Thank goodness you're here...oh, hi," she said, noticing the other monkey. "Are you a monkey spirit, too?"

"No, I'm a normal monkey."

"Never mind," said the Spirit. "I take it you've learned your lesson?" Tracey nodded, a tear in her eye and shame in her heart. "Oh, don't feel so bad!" said the kindly Spirit. "Everyone wonders what it would be like to be someone else, that's perfectly normal and nothing to be ashamed of. What's important is that you don't lose sight of what makes you special. Understand?" Tracey nodded again and asked the Spirit, please, to make her the way she was again. "Of course I will, Tracey. Fly on home, one last time. And when you land, you'll be your old self again."

Tracey was very grateful and she took off into the sky. She soared higher than she ever had before. And as she flew, she felt herself changing, so that when she landed in her old farmyard again, she was just the way she always was. And she could not have been happier.

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