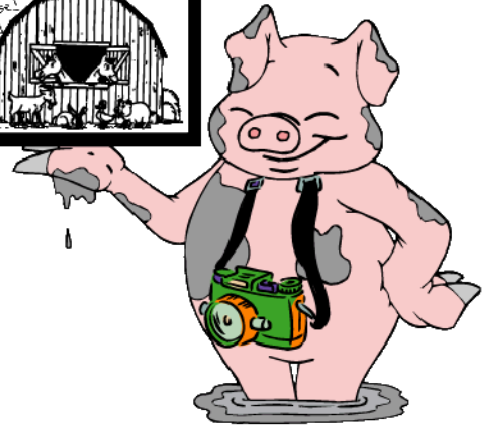


The Puffed Up Pig

By: Chantele Langley

"What do you think?" Pigsel asked with a proud grin. He had left the farm today to visit the upscale "A la Creme Organic Dairy Farm" to show some of his photographs to the Goat family. Mr. Vincent Goat looked at the photograph with a sideways glance.

"I don't know..." he said pursing his lips. The photograph was inspired by the Mona Lisa. Pigsel had just left Europe where he visited the famous painting in Paris. Then, before he flew back to the states he did a quick safari in Africa and used some local hyenas as his subject.



"I just think the animals are a bit too smiley for this piece." He held the photograph in his hoof, cocked his head to the side and looked at the photo with squinted eyes. He shook his head in a disapproving manner. "What else do you have?" Mr. Goat asked.

"Um well let me see..." Pigsel said a bit nervously. That was his best piece he thought. He dug around in his briefcase and pulled out an older black and white one he did at sunrise on the farm and a close up shot of some of the baby ducks following their mother around.

"I don't know. These just feel overdone if you will," said Mr. Goat. "Franchesca, what do you think?"

Franchesca was Mr. Goat's wife. "I just don't feel excited when I look at it." She murmured.

Pigsel felt flustered and discouraged. He never expected the goats not to like his work. He thought they may argue about the price, but it never occurred to him that they would refuse to even buy it. Don't they know that he is the most talented photographer of all the Floffertown farm animals? Most likely they just had poor taste.

"What's wrong?" Mr. Cow asked Pigsel while he was dragging his belongings out of the taxi in front of the farm. Mr. Cow could tell by Pigsel's gruff movements and frustrated look that he was not in a good mood.

"Oh nothing." Pigsel moaned. He wasn't planning on sharing the details of this less than proud moment.

"Are you sure?" Mr. Cow pushed. He grabbed one of Pigsel's black, leather bags and carried it for him as they walked to his pen.

"Well..." Pigsel slowly started. "I am just a little perturbed that I traveled all the way out to A la Creme Dairy Farm to sell my latest photos and that bird-brained goat had the nerve to say he didn't like it!"

"Hmmm." Mr. Cow paused. He knew Pigsel could sometimes be a bit prideful and not open to criticism. "I'm sorry they didn't buy it. Maybe you could ask them what kind of photographs they would like you to take."

"Preposterous! Those silly animals have too much horn and too little brain to know what it would take to make a beautiful photograph!"

"Oh...yes...I understand." Mr. Cow muttered as he laid Pigsel's bag next to his neatly decorated pen. His front doorway was always swept of all dirt and he had tiny lights above his doorway and around his windows. He was so artistic, Mr. Cow thought.

"Well thanks for your help Mr. Cow" Pigsel said kind of abruptly. He opened his door and Mr. Cow could see his neatly arranged living room decorated with candle-lit glass sconces and art work from around the world. "Good night." The door shut and the warm light was gone. Mr. Cow moseyed his way back to his family.

That night Pigsel had a disturbing dream. He was all alone in his pen surrounded by beautiful photographs that he made. He was admiring them when he heard noises outside. He looked out one of his windows and saw all the other farm animals playing. The Duck family was playing hoofball with the Cow family... the Farmer's dog, Bob, was showing the young eaglet, Samson, how to tie a boyscout knot...and the sheep were showing their new dance routine to the horses while they laughed and neighed laying in a wool blanket the sheep had given them. He suddenly lost his excitement about his photographs and was terribly sad he wasn't invited in the afternoon fun. Just then, a terrible bright white light filled his pen and in a moment all his photographs were gone.

Over his morning cappuccino, he thought, “Maybe I should spend a little less time on my work. I could be more open to criticism as well.” He walked on his front stoop to finish his coffee. Curly Sheep was practicing her dance routine by herself while wearing a pair of headphones. She twirled around and was very light on her hoofs.

"Nice job!" he yelled.

"What? Oh thanks Mr. Pigsel. I just thank God everyday for the talents he bestows on me. It really is a miracle I can even dance because my left hoof is a little bigger than it's supposed to be. I am just an undeserving receiver, really."

"Hmmm" I never thought of it that way. Pigsel walked away with his shoulders slumped. That night he spread word around that he wanted to have a party with everyone at his pen. He decorated his front stoop with moonflowers and tiki torches and all the animals came. As they were all having fun he took beautiful star lit shots of all the animals. Before they all went home he showed the gang the proofs. There were pictures of the ducks waddling with the big harvest moon sitting behind them, the horses gave their big smiles while star light reflected off their fantastic teeth, the cow family took a family portrait along the pasture's fence and many more.

"Wow. You did it again Pigsel!" hollered Mr. Cow

"Well all our talents are a gift," Pigsel quietly replied. "Besides you guys were the amazing subjects!"

Mr. Cow and many of the other animals' eyes grew very wide. Was that really Pigsel being humble?

"Well I really must turn in." Pigsel politely informed. "Good night all!"

The animals thanked him politely and trotted back to their quarters.

The next week some of the photos were posted in the New Pork Times and the Goat family offered \$200 for each photo. Pigsel didn't brag about it once and was extremely grateful!

The Puffed Up Pig

By: Chantele Langley

1. What made Pigsel decide to change his outlook on things?

2. How did the way Curly Sheep view her talent contrast with the way Pigsel saw his?

3. How did Pigsel solve his problem of feeling bad after realizing that he had been wrong and possibly rude to others?

4. What does the prefix "dis" mean in disapproving?

- A. Before
- B. Always
- C. Against
- D. Not

5. What three or four events led to Pigsel's change of heart/mind?

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____
- 4. _____

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ANSWER KEY

1. What made Pigsel decide to change his outlook on things?

The dream started making him wonder if he should change and Curly Sheep's humble way of viewing her ability to dance made him realize he was too prideful.

2. How did the way Curly Sheep view her talent contrast with the way Pigsel saw his?

Pigsel thought he was somehow better than others and Curly knew she was just a receiver of the talent and could only be grateful, not boastful.

3. How did Pigsel solve his problem of feeling bad after realizing that he had been wrong and possibly rude to others?

He invited them to a party and honored them through his pictures instead of himself.

4. What does the prefix "dis" mean in disapproving?

- A. Before
- B. Always
- C. Against
- D. Not**

5. What three or four events led to Pigsel's change of heart/mind?

- 1. The goats did not think his work was very good.**
- 2. Mr. Cow's kindness may have softened him up. (optional)**
- 3. His bad dream.**
- 4. Curly Sheep's statement about talent being a gift.**