

CUFFEE AND PIGGY RUNT

KEYWORD: Generosity.

Do you know what a runt is? No? Then I will tell you. A runt is an animal that has not grown as big as it should. In every family of little pigs there is usually a runt—one poor little pig that is smaller and weaker than its

brothers and sisters. How many of you have seen little baby pigs? They are such funny, squealy little animals. A runt is not petted and coddled by its mother so that it will have a chance to grow big and strong. No, indeed; it is just pushed and shoved about as though nobody loved it at all.

At meal time when the big mother pig calls her children to dinner, you should just hear the noise they make. Perhaps you would want to put your fingers in your ears so that you could not hear it, for every little pig runs as fast as it can to its mother squealing, "wee-ee-eh, wee-ee-eh," as hard as it can. Each pig does the best it can to get the very best place where it can get the most to eat, grunting and squealing at the others. Really the noise is quite unpleasant. As for poor little Piggy Runt, he is pushed this way and tumbled and rolled that way until it is a wonder that he gets anything at all to eat. You see, the mother pig never bothers to teach her children table manners, never having been taught any herself. She just lets them eat their dinner as they please. So if little pigs are greedy and selfish, we need not wonder why they are for they have never been taught better.

Wouldn't it be shocking if we were allowed to grow up like that and if our mothers and teachers had never taught us to be considerate? Why, we might then be pushing and shoving one another about roughly, too. We might want the best of everything for ourselves, we might always want to be first, and we should have no table manners at all. In fact, we might be just as greedy and selfish as little pigs, mightn't we? But we know that it is not the way to be happy, don't we? So we try to remember what the beautiful Star Angel Saturn says to us. Who remembers what Saturn says? He says, "Stop and think." If we just stop and think, why, we can do so many lovely, helpful things.

But as to Piggy Runt, he lived on Billy's father's farm, and he was such a poor little half-starved pig that he was

pitiful looking. He was nothing but skin and bones, you might say. But he was very strong in one thing — his voice. He could squeal harder and louder than any of his brothers and sisters. Quite an unpleasant squeal, too.

You will remember, perhaps, how in our last story Mickey the cat was so disturbed by being chased by Cuffee. Mickey was not the only animal that was annoyed by Cuffee. Every horse, cow, pig, and hen was often more or less disturbed because Cuffee had a way of running suddenly among them. He was such a lively, rollicking puppy, and he seemed to think that it was his duty to stir up all the other animals. He would dash out at the work horses, barking and nipping at their heels. He liked to make a flurry among the cows by catching hold of their tails and sending them galloping across the pasture. As for the pigs, they would set up a grunting and squealing when he caught hold of their ears; while the hens squawked and cackled and fluttered about like wild things when they saw him coming.

Billy began to teach Cuffee many things, such as keeping the hens out of the garden. Cuffee soon learned that he was not to hurt them, but he took delight in giving them a fright, though they very soon forgot and came back, for the garden had so many nice things they liked to eat.

The little pigs found a way to creep into the garden quite often, and then what fun Cuffee had chasing them out again, while the old mother pig would storm at him from the other side of the fence. So just imagine Billy's surprise when one day he found little Piggy Runt eating Cuffee's dinner while Cuffee stood by looking perfectly satisfied.

"Come and see what Cuffee is doing," he called to Eileen.

She thought it was such a strange thing that she ran and asked Mother to come and see too. They all knew that Cuffee was very fond of his food, and it did seem odd for

him to be letting Piggy Runt eat it. If Mickey so much as looked at one of his bones, he would snarl and show his teeth and look very savage. And here he was actually giving his dinner to Piggy Runt and looking pleased about it.

It just shows what love can do even to a puppy. Cuffee had learned to love little Piggy Runt, and so he became generous. Every day after that Piggy Runt would slip through the fence to get some of Cuffee's dinner, and soon he began to grow. In a couple of months he was so big that he did not look thin and scrawny any more and his little ribs were covered with fat. Billy was much pleased with Cuffee, and when visitors came he always took them out to see Cuffee and his friend, Piggy Runt.
