

PIGBOY

Vicki Grant

Orca currents

ORCA BOOK PUBLISHERS

Chapter One

A farm.

No. It was worse than that.

A “heritage” farm.

A big, fat, stinking—and I do mean stinking—heritage farm. No running water. No electricity. No pop machine.

I couldn’t believe it.

The other class went to a television studio for their field trip. They got to look through the cameras and talk to the announcers. One kid even got to read the weather forecast on the news. How cool is that?

Our class, on the other hand, was going to a stupid farm somewhere out in the sticks.

Is that fair?

I don't know why I was even surprised. What else would you expect from a guy like Mr. Benvie? There's no way he'd actually do something fun. He's a big Mr. Do-gooder. He spent his entire summer building a well in this village in Africa.

Good for him.

I mean it. I'm not just saying it.

It's really nice all those people aren't dying anymore. It's great they have water to grow their crops and feed their animals and stuff like that.

But that doesn't mean that farming is actually interesting.

That doesn't mean that anybody around here actually cares where food comes from.

That doesn't mean that any normal teenager would actually want to waste an entire day at some stupid boring farm.

Mr. Benvie's a teacher. He spends his whole life with kids. He should have known that.

I mean, what's wrong with the guy? Clearly, any field trip involving manure is not right for a bunch of fourteen-year-olds.

But manure wasn't even the worst part of the stupid field trip.

The worst part was that the farmer grows pigs. And pigs are also called hogs. And there's this poor guy in our class called Dan Hogg who everybody hated.

I don't know why exactly. Maybe it was his hair. Or his teeth. Or his glasses. Or the fact that he answered Mr. Benvie's questions as if he might

actually have a brain. Usually he just tried to sort of disappear, but it never worked. Idiots like Shane Coolen or Tyler March wouldn't take their eyes off him. They wouldn't shut up about him. They wouldn't quit laughing at him.

That's what really bugged me. Mr. Benvie saw what was going on. If he was such a good guy, why did he go and make it worse? He was all concerned about these people who live a million miles away. But he didn't seem to mind torturing some poor kid in his own class by telling everyone that we're going to see "how chickens, cows and hogs are traditionally raised."

That was too much for Shane. He yelled, "Visiting some of your relatives, are we, Dan? I always wanted to meet your mother."

Ha-ha-ha.

Everyone cracked up. Mr. Benvie said, "All right, that's enough," but I could tell he had trouble not laughing too.

I hated Shane Coolen.

I hated stupid field trips.

But, most of all, I hated being Dan Hogg.